

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063683
Inspector	Denise Jolly
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Manchester City Council
Registered person address	Town Hall Albert Square Manchester M60 2LA

Responsible individual	Karen Dolton
Registered manager	Michael Francis Booth
Date of last inspection	19/09/2014

Inspection date	06/03/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

The children's home is providing young people with an improving standard of care. Following some short-term placements that disrupted the smooth running of the home, staff have worked hard to improve relationships. The home has not operated at full capacity for some months. The Registered Manager has identified the importance of appropriate matching of placements to the home, although assessment tools are still being finalised. Young people are responding to improved consistency of approach from staff. They are clearer about expectations and boundaries that are in place to help the home offer a safe and stable place for young people to live. One young person said, 'I know that staff care about me, and even when they nag, it's for my benefit.'

Young people are missing from the home less often. Young people are not routinely offered an opportunity to speak with an independent person about their periods of absence, contrary to statutory guidance, and data is not shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This limits independent analysis of any themes or concerns that may be contributing to young people going missing. Staff have promoted increased opportunities for cooperative planning. Young people take part in structured activity such as going to work experience; going to youth clubs; having weekend jobs, and going on holiday with staff. They also have approved plans that are more suited to their independent social activities. Staff encourage young people to stick to their agreed contact plans, and take immediate action to escalate any concerns about young people's absence. This means young people's plans are regularly reviewed by appropriate professionals. Staff work hard to encourage all young people to stay in touch so that they can assess their wellbeing. Staff participate in strategy meetings to identify fresh approaches that may help young people to respond to the concerns of staff.

All staff, including the Registered Manager, have participated in training and other

professional development processes such as supervision and reflective discussion sessions. They have developed and enhanced effective relationships with external professionals. This has helped the staff to have a clear idea about the service they offer young people. Staff have been proactive in supporting young people back into education and learning opportunities, and work hard to help them overcome any blocks to progress. One young person expressed his frustration about not having a school place, although staff and education caseworkers have taken action to address the matter. This helps young people improve their self-esteem and plan for their futures.

Staff work with specialists to help young people improve their understanding of the risks involved in illegal and unhealthy activity such as drug misuse. Through surveillance and intelligence sharing with local police, staff acted quickly to address the illegal sale of 'legal high' substances in the local area, to help protect young people from potential harm. External professionals describe the home as energetic and proactive. This means that although progress is patchy at times, staff help young people to re-focus and make progress towards their goals for independent futures.

At present, young people's behaviour is generally good, and they say they get on with each other. Staff have worked with young people to identify and reduce episodes of bullying, and improvements have become evident as some young people have moved on. Nevertheless, they continue to promote young people's understanding of social and communication skills such as listening to others, and thinking about the impact of saying unkind things to others. Staff act as good role models in offering caring and pragmatic care. They help young people build relationships based on common sense, persistence and good humour. When necessary, young people's complaints are sent to external professionals for independent review. However, staff do not chase responses to ensure that young people are provided with prompt information about their concerns. Although one young person said he was 'not bothered' any more about his complaint, the lack of response has not helped him to feel confident in the complaints procedure, and may inhibit him raising concerns in the future.

Staff have improved the quality of records in the home, to ensure young people have their experiences accurately and regularly captured. This ensures that young people's plans are based on analysis of all relevant data. Records of restraint, fire safety and sanctions routinely include the participation and view of young people, and this ensures young people contribute to the overall development of the home. The manager has a realistic understanding of the development needs of the home, and continues to improve the evaluation of actions to improve the service provided to young people. Elected members visit every month, and take a keen interest in the plans and experiences of young people. They ensure their concerns are discussed with senior managers, so that appropriate action to secure improvement is identified promptly.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home that provides care and accommodation for six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/09/2014	Full	adequate
28/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
23/05/2013	Full	good
23/11/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	ensure the missing child policy includes the name of the independent person(s) who will visit children to give them an opportunity to talk about the reasons they went missing, and provides for data to be shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (Regulation 16 (4b), & Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care January 2014)	10/04/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children receive care which helps them to prepare for and supports

them into adulthood, particularly to develop practical skills and to develop financial capability, knowledge and skills (NMS 12.1)

- ensure that the home liaises with children's rights workers so that young people receive prompt feedback on any concerns and complaints they raise (NMS1.6)
- ensure an impact risk assessment and assessment of need is completed prior to admission, so that the home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet (NMS 11.2)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.