

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	30/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC063683
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Manchester City Council
Registered person address	Manchester City Council, PO Box 532, Town Hall, Manchester M60 2LA
Responsible individual	Amanda Amesbury
Registered manager	Michael Booth
Inspector	Denise Jolly

Inspection date	30/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to live in a home where staff are interested in them, want them to do well, and do their best to support them. Most young people respond to the efforts of staff with varying degrees of interest and cooperation. This creates uneven patterns of progress for them, depending upon external factors and influences, such as family and friendship groups, or relationships within their education or training placements. As a result, some young people achieve more settled periods when they are missing less often, attend training and apprenticeship courses, and engage in activities with staff. Staff remain positive and persistent during any dips in young people's progress, and work hard to sustain effective relationships with them in order to build on previous success. This means that young people can continue to develop, albeit slowly. Staff work very well with other professionals, to ensure that plans are coordinated to best support young people. For example, one young person has been able to return full-time to his school. He has achieved this because staff have persisted in order to ensure that there is an effective combination of engagement with the following agencies and plans: mental health teams, to identify appropriate medication support; good liaison with education partners, to secure appropriate assessment of, and plans to meet need; a leisure plan that includes independently supervised activity opportunities; establishing good domestic routines to help him get ready for school and consistent and persistent behaviour and relationship management in the home. Despite this settled period, the manager continues to advocate for a more suitable placement for his long-term future. Another young person spends most of his time out of the home. He is a new parent, and his future plans depend upon the outcome of an assessment of his capacity to fulfil this role. His key worker maintains clear and supportive contact with him in his agreed place of temporary residence. This means that he has someone he trusts to help him through any difficult feelings. Additionally, she has provided practical support to ensure that he remains fit and healthy. He has acquired all of his immunisations, and has a dental plan in place. Through his relationship with his key worker, he has been able to engage with other	

professionals, such as housing agents, a social worker and health visitors, who will help to build a more positive future for him.

Other young people find it more difficult to make and sustain progress. One young person has a history of going missing for significant periods, and a lack of engagement with his education placements. When in the home he enjoys warm relationships with staff, but this is insufficient to enable him to overcome his wish to be with family and friends, or to reduce the frequency with which he goes missing with any consistency. Staff supported him to attend his education review meeting, at which he acknowledged that, 'All the help I need is in place, I just need to get on with it.' The manager acknowledged that the plans in place to support him are ineffective, and require a thorough review of both suitability and appropriateness of placement and strategies. Staff have been unable to influence him to think about and respond to the impact of his actions on his life chances. This limits his opportunities for growth and development towards a positive adult life.

A review by the local authority of the conduct of children's homes is well under way. Managers have not received direct feedback about any plan arising from this review, but are engaged in some improvements, such as participating in review groups that include leaders from all children's departments. This has improved the manager's access and contribution to strategic decisions about the agenda for children who are looked after by the local authority, specifically those who live in residential care, so that their needs are considered as part of the holistic plan. Independent visitors have improved their evaluation of how well the home safeguards and protects young people. The local authority has plans to provide training to help the visitors to understand their roles and responsibilities fully, but no date has yet been agreed.

Managers are implementing new systems and processes that help them to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the home in helping young people's lives to improve. The way that staff record, measure and support progress made by young people is developing, in order to provide a sensitive and accurate record of their lives, and the strategies that support their ongoing development. A new quality assurance document provides a database about young people's progress and needs. However, this information is not yet sufficiently analysed to inform the development of the home. Neither does the improvement plan yet include how the views and experiences of young people will influence any improvements. Young people discuss their immediate plans and concerns with staff, but are less inclined to engage in long-term thinking about the home. Since the last inspection, staff have agreed a plan that means that young people can choose, buy and cook their food at weekends instead of eating from a set menu. One young person said how pleased he was that staff had listened to his wishes in this area.

The manager is maintaining a staff skills audit, as well as engaging staff in authority-wide training for 'signs of safety'. This provides a basis for protecting young people by identifying and planning active engagement with risks faced by

young people and complements the staff training in attachment and emotional support, which focuses on positive strategies to address young people's feelings and behaviours. However, due to a lack of integration and staff discussion and evaluation of the introduction of other guidance, such as a revised behaviour and sanctions policy, it is unclear how some details, such as the range of sanctions and rewards, will impact upon the positive approaches that staff currently use. This means that inconsistency may arise in how staff understand and use the policy, creating confusion for young people.

The manager has improved the guidance for staff on how to help young people who have limited English to understand how to access complaints and advocacy advice. Staff provide important information, such as fire safety and their care plans, to young people in a language that they can understand. All relevant elements are now included in the home's revised statement of purpose. The manager is being trained to complete age assessments, in order that plans for unaccompanied asylum seekers are not unduly delayed.

The home and senior managers have responded effectively to a complaint made to Ofsted by a young person. Following their investigation and improvement plan, relationships between young people are better, and the young person confirmed that he was satisfied with the outcome. He was also able to reflect on the feelings that prompted him to be upset in the first place, and identified that relationships had got better because he was less challenging towards the other young person. He identified his responsibility for promoting good relationships in the home, and that staff can help him to do this. It was clear from records that staff had supported him, by discussion and reflection, to engage in a more positive approach to living with others.

Management monitoring of the records in the home has improved, so that they now identify and address any shortfalls. This means that staff improve young people's safety by clear accounts of their periods of being missing, and key workers ensure that action plans are updated following new information or changes of strategy arising from multi-professional review. No new staff have started in the home, but the manager described more effective procedures to ensure that all staff records are available to managers when staff transfer internally, so that any development needs are identified. This improves the overall safety and welfare of young people.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority run home that accommodates up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2016	CH – Full	Good
06/03/2015	CH – Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2014	CH – Full	Adequate
28/03/2014	CH – Interim	Satisfactory progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the '*Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards*'. The registered person must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The care planning standard 14. (1) The care planning standard is that children: (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure: (b) that arrangements are in place to: (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home and (e) that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if: (ii) the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission.	27/05/2016
Review of quality of care 45. (2) In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating: (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.	27/05/2016

Recommendations

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

- By facilitating professional discussion and reflection, ensure that the home's behaviour policy remains compatible with the emotional and positive approaches staff use to engage young people ('The Guide to the Quality Standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20).

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the '*Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards*'.

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