

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	25 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC063813
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	DMR Services Limited
Registered provider address	DMR Children's Services, 102 Queslett Road East, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2EZ

Responsible individual	Sally Neville
Registered manager	Samantha Turley
Inspector	Michelle Spruce

Inspection date	25 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC063813

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff are extremely knowledgeable about the needs of young people and work highly effectively in reducing poor behaviour.
- The use of physical intervention is minimal. Staff use effective de-escalating techniques to defuse incidents.
- Young people are safe in the home. The staff provided a committed, child-centred approach that shows young people they are cared for.
- The manager and leaders lead by example and are committed to providing the best care for young people.
- Young people make progress in building positive relationships while living in the home.
- Young people make successful transitions from the home in relation to their care plans.
- The home works effectively with external partners to share information.
- Staff have excellent relationships with young people and each other; this helps them to provide a consistent approach that gives the young people a clear message about what is expected of them.
- The manager and staff team work extremely well with external partners including the police.
- There are some identified weaknesses. They are in relation to privacy, the garden, food safety, supervision records and policies.

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(s) 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(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the child protection standard, with particular reference to the maintenance of the garden and food safety, the registered provider must ensure: (2)(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	30 June 2016
The registered person must ensure that the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21(a))	30 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3).
- Ensure any home using CCTV or other monitoring equipment should have a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
9 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16 June 2015	Full	Good
17 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18 November 2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make progress in building positive relationships while living in the home. Staff have excellent relationships with young people and each other. This helps them to provide a consistent approach that gives young people a clear message about what is expected of them. The staff build up trust with young people over time. This helps young people to develop mutual respect for each other, staff and the environment. The quality of care provided is exceptional. Staff are passionate, committed and skilled in providing individualised care to young people who have experienced trauma. Staff never give up and continue to provide a consistent, caring approach even when young people present challenging behaviours. Comments received in a survey response about the care young people receive from staff said, 'They understand the needs of my young person and provide him with the appropriate support. They are determined to support the young people in their care to achieve in their education. They work well with professionals and families of the young people in their care.' Young people recognise the progress they make from their starting points and take ownership of how far they have come. Some of them have made significant progress in education, health and behaviour. This demonstrates the value that young people now place on themselves. As a result, confidence and self-esteem improve. Young people benefit from a healthy diet. They are consulted about the food they like and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. Routine health appointments are regularly attended, and physical exercise forms part of everyday life. This keeps young people fit and well. Some young people have been out of education for a significant period of time. The home has an education support worker who works with the schools and the home to ensure all young people have access to, or are provided with, an education placement. As a result, suitable education placements have been obtained or are in the process of being arranged. This means that young people continue to receive education they are entitled to. The view and opinions of young people form an important part of the running of the home. The manager regularly consults with them during house meetings, and	

key workers provide further opportunities for individual discussion. This helps young people shape the future of the home they live in. Young people are actively involved in the planning of their care. They attend and contribute to their reviews. This ensures they are listened to.

Young people have access to a range of activities that meet their social and physical needs. They discuss with staff their preferred choice of recreational activity. This helps staff to plan and facilitate the event. As a result, young people improve their social skills.

Young people remain in contact with friends and family. Contact is supported and visitors to the home are made welcome. This strengthens bonds and helps relationships to grow.

The staff support young people to embrace equality and diversity. Young people have a clear understanding of their own identities and history. Staff encourage young people's individuality. This helps them to be more confident and accepting of who they are. A parent said, 'He now knows his identity. They have done work around his sexuality with a councillor. He is comfortable with who he is now.'

The staff work hard to prepare young people for leaving care. Basic life skills are encouraged over a period of time. This helps young people to become confident in their abilities, skill and knowledge. This enables them to leave care in a planned and successful manner. A social worker said, 'The home have a robust plan of leaving care. There is a lot of work going on to help support him to independence.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel safe and protected. The service has strong links with the local safeguarding board and staff access their training, skill and knowledge to protect young people from harm or abuse. A social worker said, 'Staff are quick to inform our emergency duty team and the police when my young person is not back in placement at the expected time'. Young people know staff care for them and help them to stay safe. A young person said, 'They make sure I'm in on time and discuss things with me about keeping safe'. The football area in the garden is secured by a perimeter fence. Many brambles and nettles have grown through it and across the area where young people play football. This presents a hazard and does not keep young people safe from the risk of injury. The manager and staff monitor the home in line with health and safety requirements. However, the logbook used to record food temperatures has not	

been completed for a considerable amount of time. This does not guarantee that cooked food is served at the required temperature. Fire drills, tests and equipment checks ensure the home is protected against the risk of fire.

A young person living at the home has recently moved bedroom. The ensuite bathroom window is overlooked by a fire escape staircase. There is insufficient window dressing to protect the young person's privacy. This has the potential to compromise his safety.

Staff are extremely knowledgeable about the needs of young people and work highly effectively to reduce behaviour. The use of physical intervention is minimal. Since the last full inspection there have been four incidents that required intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort by staff. A parent said, 'My child has never had to be restrained. I know it is the very last resort. They would contact me straight away if they were put in that position.' The use of de-escalating techniques to defuse incidents is effective. This reduces the need for staff to physically restrain young people. Young people are praised and receive rewards for positive behaviour. Sanctions are fair and proportionate. A young person said, 'Staff praise me and I have positive rewards when I complete my goals'.

Young people recognise the progress they make in changing their offending behaviour. A young person said, 'I've been good and haven't got arrested since I've been here. They treat you like an adult.' Social workers also speak highly of the difference in young people's behaviour since living at the home. One social worker responded to a survey by saying, 'He has engaged extremely well whilst in residential. His presenting behaviours in foster care were concerning and risky whereby there were several placement breakdowns. Since moving his behaviour has stabilised and he is engaging in positive activities and education. He describes feeling happy, safe and secure.'

Staff know how to identify triggers to behaviour because they have robust, clear plans and risk assessments that help them to understand how to support young people. Staff communicate well between them. They have handovers before and after shifts. This helps them to provide good continuity of care that is consistent. As a result, young people remain safe and protected.

Missing from home incidents have reduced and are not related to child sexual exploitation. Young people who live at the home rarely go missing from care. They are supported by staff who recognise the issues that influence young people who want to run away. A young person said, 'I did go missing. Staff spoke to me and discussed me having time out overnight. This was arranged properly and with my social worker.' This approach keeps young people safe.

Young people respect each other's individuality. The home actively promotes diversity in a way that allows individuals to feel safe without fear of expressing

who they are. Young people accept each other's differences. As a result, group living is a pleasant experience.

There have been no complaints about the home. Young people confirm that they know how to raise a concern and feel confident to do so.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post for over five years. She holds a level 5 diploma in management and has significant experience of managing residential childcare settings. She is supported by an equally experienced and qualified deputy manager. Together they work well, leading a skilled and passionate workforce. Most staff are qualified. Those who are unqualified are within regulatory timescales at present to obtain their qualification within two years of starting work. There was one recommendation made at the last inspection. The manager has improved risk assessment in regard to matching placements when taking a new admission. The new risk assessment now shows the risks that may potentially affect young people either already placed or being placed. This keeps young people safe. Some staff have been recruited since the last full inspection in June 2015. Staff are safe to work with young people because the selection and vetting process is robust. All relevant checks are completed prior to candidates beginning work. This ensures that unsuitable candidates do not have access to young people. All staff receive good regular supervision and annual appraisal, and undertake appropriate training. The manager and deputy manager confirm that they too receive regular supervision. However, there is no record since November 2015 to demonstrate this. There is a written policy in regard to the use of surveillance and monitoring. However, it is not in line with regulation. This does not guarantee that the measure is used appropriately. The manager continues to review the quality of care provided to young people. Additional monitoring is completed through a monthly visit from an independent visitor. This ensures the service is monitored effectively and any shortfalls are quickly identified. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed regularly. Staff provide consistent care in line with the home's objectives and ethos. The deputy manager uses supervision meetings to revisit the statement of purpose. This keeps staff up to date and	

informed of the home's operation.

All significant events are recorded and the appropriate persons are notified. This ensures information is shared and any action that needs to be taken is carried out immediately. This keeps young people safe.

The manager is proactive in challenging services that are not effective. For example, a young person was discharged from a mental health service without sufficient medication. The manager challenged the action and worked with the general practitioner and the mental health service to rectify the situation.

The manager and leaders lead by example and are committed in providing the best care for young people. A survey response from a staff member said, 'The home is a fantastic place to work. I feel supported by the team and the management'.

The home works effectively and extremely well with external partners, including the police, to share information. A social worker completed a recent survey about the service and said, 'Communication is excellent. I receive weekly reports. I am also updated with any issues that staff feel I need to be informed about.'

The home environment is welcoming and provides young people with sufficient space to relax. Visitors to the home commented in a survey: 'The environment is friendly, warm, homely and relaxed. The staff are very supportive and young-person focused. It is apparent their goal is to ensure that young people in their care receive a holistic package of support to meet their needs.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people, and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 that 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 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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