

SC065189

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home forms part of a large social care company.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- Young people make excellent progress in all areas of their development.
- Young people feel that staff genuinely care about them. As a result, young people develop strong positive relationships with staff.
- Young people become increasingly safe. Young people make considerable

progress in addressing their risk-taking behaviour because of the high levels of support that staff provide.

- Staff are excellent communicators. They maintain good partnership working with professional stakeholders and families so that young people benefit from consistent care.
- Staff promote young people's contact with family, friends and previous carers where that is safe and in their best interests. This develops young people's sense of identity and provides them with a strong support network.
- Staff value education. They promote young people's attendance and engagement with school and college, and young people's outcomes improve.
- Staff promote young people's emotional resilience and practical independence so that they are well prepared for their transitions to their next placement.

The children's home's areas for development

- The registered manager has not acted robustly to address a maintenance issue promptly within the home. This impacted on a young person's feeling of self-worth.
- Staff have not recorded young people's dissatisfaction with their care as a complaint. This prevents swift resolution of these issues.
- The registered manager has allowed staff, with whom young people have strong and positive attachments, to move from the home to cover organisational needs. This has an adverse impact on young people.
- The registered manager has not ensured that staff understand the therapeutic model of care which underpins their practice as detailed in their statement of purpose. This prevents staff linking their practice to theory.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
22/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/09/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who– (a) understand the children's home overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered provider must ensure that staff– 2 (b)(i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose.	09/06/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	09/06/2017

Recommendations

- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. In particular, in addressing maintenance issues robustly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, para 3.7)
- The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of temporary staff will not prevent children from

receiving continuity of care that they need. In particular in moving staff members from the team with whom young people have strong, positive attachments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make excellent progress. Both young people receive highly individualised care and support from staff who genuinely care for them. Young people have exceptional relationships with staff who recognise the impact of the care that they provide. Young people are able to talk to staff about what is difficult for them, and this has been key in improving their outcomes. Professional stakeholders recognise this. An independent reviewing officer said: 'My young person was very positive about the support she has from staff and put the changes down to them and their support and belief in her.' A young person's social worker said: 'Specifically, she has opened up a massive amount – it is great that she has got to that point and is talking to staff about what she needs to, so she can address these issues and move on.'

Staff are skilled at developing relationships with both families and professional stakeholders so that young people receive well-coordinated and consistent care. The positive relationships that staff have with young people's families and previous carers means that they are able to support meaningful and enjoyable contact for young people, which promotes their sense of identity. School and college report positive relationships with staff who are excellent communicators who value education. Both young people are making good educational progress. For those young people who have missed considerable periods of education, this represents significant progress. Staff support young people to fulfil their academic potential. They transport them to school and college and ensure that they complete their homework and exam preparation. One lecturer said:

'The staff have been very influential in my young person's progress at college. We have been in constant contact to ensure she has the opportunity to overcome any barriers to learning. This has ensured that she is now flourishing on her course and is set to gain her GCSE English this year.'

Staff promote young people's physical and emotional health. Staff support young people to engage with universal and specialist services, to meet their particular needs. This includes meeting both young people's emotional needs and their emotional resilience develops. The team works effectively with therapists to provide consistency of care for young people. However, their understanding of the therapeutic model underpinning this work is weak. Staff provide nurturing care for young people without a clear understanding of the basis for the therapeutic model of care that they provide; this would further improve the quality of care that they provide.

Staff are proactive in preparing young people for their transitions to live independently or return to living in foster care. They seek clarity from placing authorities, thus ensuring

that they are able to implement young people's care plans in a timely manner. For those young people who are moving towards living independently, staff ensure that they have the practical skills, as well as the emotional resilience, for adult life. For example, staff support young people to maintain part-time work where they learn important life skills such as confidently managing money, good time keeping and taking responsibility.

Staff ensure that young people enjoy activities in the local community and within the home. Young people attend scouts, the local church and music lessons, as well as trips to the local cinema and going out for long walks in the countryside. Staff know young people well and consequently are easily able to engage them in enjoyable activities such as pamper nights and planning their summer holiday. They support young people to maintain positive friendships, which improves young people's social networks. Both young people value their relationships with staff. One young person said: 'I get on with staff and feel safe. I would talk to them if I had a problem... I like to sing and dance with staff to music as well as telling jokes.' The other young person said: 'My staff care about me, they genuinely do. They're good. I can't fault them, they want the best for me, they do everything for me... The manager is a legend. He always helps us.'

Young people live in a warm and friendly environment. Their rooms are personalised, reflecting their personalities and interests, including having their own pet hamster. This helps young people to invest in their home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are safe. Staff understand young people and their behaviour well. They support young people to become increasingly safe through the positive relationships that they have with young people. This allows young people to talk about what is difficult for them and their risk-taking behaviour. Staff use direct work with young people to support them in understanding expectations about their own behaviour and how to recognise damaging and harmful relationships. Young people have made considerable progress in reducing their risk-taking behaviours such as substance misuse. An independent reviewing officer said: 'At the most recent review, which was very positive, my young person had made significant progress... I was satisfied that there had been a significant reduction in risk taking behaviour... and she reports feeling safe and well cared for.'

Young people do not go missing. They have a strong investment in relationships with staff which means that they want to be at home and to spend time with them. Staff understand how to respond if young people do go missing. However, this has not been necessary since the last inspection. Staff have good working relationships with the local police who call in informally, developing positive relationships with staff and young people. Staff have not needed to call the police to the home for many months. This improves relationships within the local community. Staff understand young people's behaviour and have detailed behaviour management plans, which they implement consistently as a team. Staff recognise how to de-escalate behaviour, and physical intervention has not been necessary since the last inspection. This reflects the significant progress that young people have made in self-regulation.

Staff are alert to issues of child sexual exploitation, including ensuring online safety. They are vigilant, and complete direct work with young people to improve their awareness. Staff understand how to manage child protection concerns and allegations; this has not been necessary during this inspection period.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is ambitious for young people. He has high expectations and young people have made good progress. He has the necessary skills and experience to manage the home and is completing his level 5 diploma in leadership and management in residential childcare. The registered manager has made good progress in addressing the requirements raised at the last inspection and has improved the records of who has worked in the home. He ensures that he safely recruits new staff to the team. Staff report feeling well supported and receive monthly or twice monthly supervision, dependent on their position. The registered manager ensures that staff receive appropriate training to meet young people's needs. The deputy manager has introduced staff development plans to support staff in fulfilling their potential and also in addressing areas for improvement. As a result, the quality of care which staff provide for young people improves.

The registered manager and staff endeavour to ensure that young people receive consistent care. They have generally achieved this because core staff cover for each other, with 14 different temporary and agency staff working in the home in the last four months. Although one young person has felt the impact of agency staff working in the home, she said: '...it is not fair that my staff are moved, I build up relationships and then they get moved to other homes where people are kicking it off... I tell the manager and he says it is not his decision when staff are moved from the home.' The registered manager has tried to minimise the impact of organisational decision-making regarding staffing by ensuring that the member of staff who was moved completes some shifts each month in the home.

The registered manager has a monitoring system in place to drive forward improvements in the quality of care. This demonstrates that he understands young people's plans and that young people's outcomes have improved since the last inspection. There is capacity for further improvement as he identified that a young person's shower was not working over a period of months, but this was not resolved. This has had a significant impact on the young person who has felt devalued. The registered manager has not escalated this robustly which means that it took six months to finally resolve this. However, there are also organisational shortfalls which have prevented this being resolved more swiftly. Although staff regularly discuss the complaints process with young people, who do understand how to complain, they have not recorded a complaint around this issue which could have resulted in this being resolved more quickly.

The registered manager ensures that case records reflect young people's day-to-day achievements. Staff celebrate with young people when they achieve their goals such as improved college attendance or improved behaviour. The home reflects each young

person's interests. It is homely with much evidence of young people's belongings and photos.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC065189

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road,
Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Niel Shelmerdine

Registered manager: Stuart Roberts

Inspector

Rebecca Quested, social care inspector

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