

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	26 April 2016
Unique reference number	SC065780
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Milestones Care Homes Limited
Registered person address	32 Fieldway, Maghull, Liverpool L31 5NB

Responsible individual	Mark Armstrong
Registered manager	Nina Wilson
Inspector	Elaine Allison

Inspection date	26 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Not judged
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

SC065780

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have positive experiences and make very good progress living in this supportive home. They are safer and have improved educational opportunities. Risk-taking behaviour, such as misuse of drugs, has significantly reduced with one young person now drug free.
- Young people's participation in education is very good, they are making progress and achieving. Staff work closely and proactively with education providers to meet the complex needs of the young people.
- Young people benefit from having regular and positive contact with family members and those significant in their lives. They reported feeling happy with levels of contact. Also, parents report high levels of satisfaction at the support that staff provide to their children and how well they support contact.
- Young people who previously had been at high risk of sexual exploitation are now safer and have significantly reduced the risks that they formerly faced.
- The staff team and managers work very collaboratively with placing authorities, parents and other agencies. All feedback gained during this inspection was very positive. Such positive multi-agency working has led to improvements in the emotional well-being, social skills and educational achievements of young people.
- There is effective management oversight of staff practice that maintains good standards of care. Staff are well supported in their role and there is good external review of the quality of care provided.
- The home is decorated and furnished to a very good standard and provides a homely and welcoming environment for young people. Bedrooms have been highly personalised and reflect the individual preferences of young people.

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
44. Independent person: visits and reports 44.—(1) The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (4) The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (7) The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— (a) HMCI; (b) upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located; (c) the placing authorities of children; (d) the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and (e) the responsible individual (if one is nominated).	28 May 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home is led and managed in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. In particular, ensure that all staff are aware of and working within the parameters of the home's statement of purpose ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4).

- Ensure that staff engage proactively to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the child's care on an ongoing basis. This specifically relates to demonstrating progress in targets set for young people ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.3).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21 December 2015	Interim	Not judged
11 August 2015	Full	Inadequate
18 March 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11 November 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people's views are central to how the home operates. Staff value young people's opinions and provide regular opportunities for young people to share their views. The manager has ensured that young people are included in making decisions about how the home could be improved. An example of this includes young people choosing the decor for their bedrooms. This helps young people to feel valued and respected. Where appropriate, staff support young people to have regular interaction with their families. This includes regular visits home and telephone calls. This allows young people to maintain their sense of belonging within their families. Young people have made progress, even in the short time that they may have been living in the home. Examples given by professionals and families include a significant reduction in risk-taking behaviour, such as drug and alcohol misuse, successful return to college (especially for one young person who had previously been excluded and not been in education) and increasing tolerance and containment of previously chaotic behaviours. A parent commented, 'What can I say? She has only been living there for a short time but the changes are there for all to see, she is back in college, she hasn't been up to the things she used to do. I am delighted she is beginning to make the right choices in life.' Staff are excellent advocates for young people in terms of health and education. Young people benefit greatly from living in a home where the value of education is promoted and encouraged. They particularly enjoy sensitive and well thought out support to address their education needs. For example, staff from the home work tirelessly to bring together professionals, including social workers and education providers, to ensure appropriate education provisions are in place for individual young people. An education professional commented, 'The staff at the home are really proactive at bringing the relevant people together to discuss young people's education. This has resulted in the learner being back in college full time.' Staff respectfully challenge decisions in order to get the best services for young people. For example, when young people have been discharged from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for missing an appointment, the home will re-refer and push for appointments to be reinstated. This ensures that young people's mental and psychological needs are met.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Although some of the young people arrive at the home engaging in risky activities, the measures taken by staff help these young people to become increasingly safe. One young person who had a history of drug and alcohol misuse and was deemed at high risk of child sexual exploitation has made excellent progress. The young person has now stopped all these activities and the risk of child sexual exploitation has significantly reduced. A social worker commented, 'The risk reduction in such a short space of time has been phenomenal, the drug taking behaviour and the risks of CSE [child sexual exploitation] have all but stopped.' Consequently, young people are safer than they were before. Professionals report excellent levels of communication between themselves and the home. This collaborative approach means that staff are working together to ensure that young people are kept safe. A social worker said, 'The weekly reports are invaluable and contribute to the overall care decisions for the young person.' An education professional commented, 'The communication between ourselves and the home means that we can communicate daily on how the young person is coping both in and out of college. This has really worked and the young person is now back in college after a suspension and doing very well.' Staff spend time with young people helping them to understand how to avoid risky situations, whether these are in the community, within the home or online. An excellent example of this includes a discussion during a key work session about online safety and sexual exploitation. This helped the young person to understand. Staff tailor behaviour management to each young person's needs and clearly outline their safety and supervision needs in their behaviour support plan. Young people are fully involved in 'what works' for them in times of crisis. The plan provides detailed information into the reasons why young people present with challenging behaviour and informs staff on how best to support them. Staff have received training on de-escalation, and focus on techniques and the development of positive relationships. Recruitment records demonstrate that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed to establish, as far as possible, that those employed pose no risk to the young people. New staff have an induction programme that includes all mandatory training and familiarisation with the home's policy and procedures. Ongoing training, supervision and annual appraisal provide opportunities for continuing development to ensure that staff have the skills and ability to help and protect the children that the home caters for. The physical environment is safe and protects young people from accidental injury. Health and safety processes are robust. Each young person has a detailed individual risk assessment that staff understand. As a result, the home is able to take all necessary steps to reduce the likelihood of young people being at risk of	

harm. Environmental risk assessments accurately reflect identified risks and potential hazards. Young people and staff understand fire safety systems and how to respond if emergencies occur. The safety of young people is promoted further through good environmental health and food safety processes.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leadership and management ensure that the needs of young people remain the guiding principle of practice and development. Since the last inspection, there has been a change in registered manager. The registered manager has been in post for four months. She holds a number of relevant qualifications, including a degree in early childhood studies. She is currently undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare and is due to complete this in July 2016. The home's statement of purpose is up to date and provides a defined level of information that confirms the services on offer and how they work in practice. However, staff's knowledge of the statement of purpose was limited, with some staff being unaware of the home's specific aims and objectives. This may impact on the consistency within the staff team to meet the young people's needs. Staff receive clear guidance and encouragement to meet the needs of young people to a high standard. Staff receive good training and regular qualitative supervision. Recent training has included issues related to identifying and responding to child sexual exploitation and use of de-escalation in challenging situations. Staff say that they receive extremely good support, which culminates in raising expectations of practice, improving consistency and encouraging innovation. They say that such support has improved under the leadership of the new manager, with staff being more involved in contributing their ideas and being encouraged to take on increased areas of responsibility. Staff commented that 'the manager is very knowledgeable and shares that knowledge throughout the team' and 'I feel very supported and the supervision is excellent'. As a result, young people are looked after by staff who are motivated and passionate about supporting them to learn and progress in all areas of their lives. The registered manager's focus on driving higher standards is a key indicator of the home's capacity to improve. The records and the quality of care planning are now much improved. Risk assessments are up to date and detailed. Behaviour management plans are meeting young people's needs and this means that young people now have effective strategies in place to help them keep safe and progress. Staff have individual development plans within which their training needs are identified and met. All of the staff are either trained to the minimum professional level or are in the process of working towards this.	

Staff understand the importance of good record keeping and there are noticeable improvements since the last inspection. Records are clear and well maintained. Consequently, they provide a clear picture of a young person's needs. However, placement plans within the home are not set out in a way which clearly demonstrates the progress of young people or timeframes for the work to be completed in.

The registered manager has a clear appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and the areas to consolidate and improve upon. An excellent approach to evaluating the quality of care ensures that routine monitoring procedures are completed which take an in depth assessment of how well the home is functioning. This enables the registered manager to highlight patterns and trends in the behaviour of young people and the practice of adults who care for them. However, monitoring visits by an independent person have not been completed. This fails to provide an independent overview of the level of care provided.

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 looked after children 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 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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