

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	04/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC065789
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Good Foundations Limited
Registered provider address	6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 1BP

Responsible individual	Andrew Mannix
Registered manager	Robert Jones
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	04/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC065789

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people have made significant progress in all areas of their lives, because they live in a well-maintained, stable, safe and caring home environment.
- Young people are exceptionally well cared for by staff who clearly demonstrate their commitment to meeting the young people's individual needs and keeping them safe.
- Young people continue to thrive and grow in confidence. Staff prioritise their wishes and feelings and actively involve them in all decisions about their lives. This has significantly increased their self-esteem and confidence.
- Highly effective care planning and partnership working ensure that young people continue to make improvements in all areas of their lives.
- Staff's innovative ideas are maximising young people's learning and training opportunities. Young people benefit from full-time education/training placements, paid employment and a range of hobbies and enrichment activities.
- Young people have benefited from a stable, qualified and experienced staff team. This has enabled them to develop trusting and respectful relationships.
- The exceptional commitment shown by the registered manager and staff team ensures that young people feel highly valued. The registered manager strives to achieve the highest standards for young people in his care.
- The registered manager and staff have high aspirations for young people and show tenacity in helping them to achieve their individual goals.
- Staff continue to value, support and encourage young people to maintain contact with all-important people in their lives.

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

Recommendations

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

- All children's home's case records must be kept up to date, signed, and dated by the author of the entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home for three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good
26/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people enjoy extremely positive experiences in this nurturing, supportive and safe home. They receive an exceptional quality of care from an extremely knowledgeable and understanding manager and staff team. The experiences of living in this home clearly enhance the life chances of all young people and are making an important difference in their lives. Young people were keen to talk about their home, the staff team and the support they receive. They said, 'This home is without any doubt outstanding.' 'This is my home, not a house, and staff are like family to me.' 'They [the staff] really do care and come in at the start of the day happy, smiling and treat us like normal kids.' 'Without the help and support of [manager and staff] I dread to think how different my life would be.' Staff consistently deliver exceptionally personalised care plans and intervention programmes that encourage young people to prosper in all areas of their development. Staff are extremely motivated and have high aspirations for young people. Promoting positive outcomes is central to the work and ethos of the home. Young people continually convey their views, wishes and feelings on the running of the home and all aspects of their care and welfare. As a result, young people are pivotal to the development of the home. One young person said, 'The staff here put their heart and soul into making [my] and [other young people]'s names life the best it can be. They are always telling us that you can do anything you put your mind to with the right support.' Consultation with young people is exceptional in all aspects of their care. Staff undertake regular and effective one-to-one sessions with young people. These are very detailed and address a range of topics relevant to the individual young person, including their overall progress and experiences. These topics include education, risks in the community and independence planning. One young person said, 'Although I always felt like staff just like to nag us, now I understand they only want the best for us.' Staff reliably recognise the steps that are necessary to engage all stakeholders. They work tirelessly to build relationships with families, schools, colleges and health professionals that support young people. Key workers conduct regular reviews of plans, so that they remain up to date and relevant to meet the changing needs of young people. They take initiatives and propose new goals and actions between formal review periods, so that young people's development continues to grow. Staff are adept at referring back to young people to verify the direction they are taking. This ensures that young people remain fully aware of their goals and plans, and are committed to working with staff. All young people have made significant progress in their education, training and employment. Staff have clear expectations that young people will engage in education and	

training, and are proud and celebrate all of their achievements. Staff send young people off each day with praise and encouragement, and are ready to hear all about their day when they return. When young people experience difficulties, staff speak to them and arrange meetings with teachers and tutors. This ensures that immediate action is taken to rectify any issues, with a clear plan for support and reintegration. This values the experiences of young people and helps them to value the opportunities that education provides them with. One young person said, 'I never thought I would have a job and be looking towards my future. The staff here have always supported me when I had problems at both college and school and never gave up on me. I can't thank them enough for all they have done.'

When there have been delays in local authorities providing a suitable education provision for young people, both the manager and staff have continued to challenge on behalf of the young people, to ensure that they are provided with meaningful and considered alternatives. This ensures that all young people have the right opportunities to reach their full education potential.

Staff proactively promote the emotional, psychological and physical health needs of young people, through established and effective partnership working with general and specialist health services. Staff provide discreet advice and encouragement to young people about sensitive matters, such as sexual health and development. One young person said, 'I can go to any of the staff, and they will all talk openly to me about any subjects and if they are not sure they are not afraid to say, but they will find out and come back and tell us.' As a result, young people's health has improved and they engage with health professionals to receive the treatment that they need to remain fit and well.

Staff work closely with families, and this is a considerable strength of the service. Young people verbalise their wishes and views in relation to current and proposed contact arrangements. Staff work with placing authorities to ensure that these views are included in their care plans, pathway plans and transition plans. For example, they supported a young person's wish to increase the frequency of contact and advocated strongly for this. This was subsequently agreed. Furthermore, staff work with families to equip parents with the necessary skills to continue to support and develop young people. One parent commented, 'I can't believe the impact the staff have had on my son's life. He is so much calmer, willing to engage and now goes on activities, including the summer holiday, instead of staying in his room. Contact has improved for all the family, and I am always kept fully updated. I really think they [staff] are fantastic.'

Staff organise a wide range of suitable activities for young people. These include life-skills opportunities, like budgeting, shopping and cooking, as well as activities that expand their interests and knowledge of the world. Staff support young people in planning for their futures and ensure that they have learnt many new skills as they move on to independent living. One young person said, 'Although I'm looking forward to having my own flat, I'm also a bit anxious and will miss all the staff, but I know they will continue to help me and this will still be like my home, so I can come for my Sunday dinner and a chat.' This approach helps young people to

develop their skills and confidence and prepares them as they move into adulthood.

The physical condition of the home is outstanding. It is warm, comfortable, well decorated and clean. There are numerous photographs around the home of young people enjoying fun times with their families, friends and staff. All young people's bedrooms reflect their individual needs. They are bright and inviting, and young people are proud of the improvements they have made in keeping them clean and comfortable. In addition, the bathroom has been fully renovated, and the garden area has been refurbished to a high standard. Young people were fully involved in the redesign of the garden and were consulted on the new colour schemes throughout the home. This leads to a home that young people can enjoy and are clearly proud of.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people are clear that they feel very safe and happy in the home. They said that this is because they know that staff care about them. They also said that they trust staff to work well with the important people in their lives and to represent their views openly and honestly. Professionals said that staff provide safe and nurturing care and promote transparency in their relationships. This instils confidence in the ability of staff to keep young people protected from harm. Because the home provides detailed and accurate information about any incidents or difficulties experienced by young people, external professionals can assess the quality of safe practice in the home. They are confident in the positive impact and influence that staff have on their young people. Staff have received training in a range of multi-disciplinary child protection courses appropriate to their roles. They use this knowledge well, to assess the risks posed to individual young people, and create strategies to minimise them. Key workers devise, monitor and review careful risk management plans that enhance the safety and well-being of young people. These typically include measures that encourage young people to identify risks themselves and to manage them safely. However, some risk assessments that were updated have not always been signed and dated	

to indicate who the author of the changes was and when the changes were made. This did not impact directly on young people's safety, as staff demonstrated an in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of young people's individual risks, and their interventions are consistent and effective. This was clearly a recording matter and, when brought to the attention of the manager, was immediately rectified.

Young people take increasing responsibility for making the right choices, while remaining protected from harm. The development of young people's awareness is apparent, because young people no longer go missing. There have been no incidents of physical intervention and no incidents of aggression or damage to the home. Staff help young people to review their friendships and contact with inappropriate individuals. This protects them from exploitation because they learn to avoid the dangers of unsafe relationships. Young people recognise the progress that they have made. They say that, because staff value them, they have learnt to appreciate a safer and more positive lifestyle.

Staff are alert to the risks presented to young people through the internet and mobile technology. They tackle this realistically, acknowledging the benefits of the internet, while informing young people how to use it more safely. In particular, staff compile agreements with young people that outline staff's expectations and the potential risks and consequences, should they breach the agreement. There are clear support systems in place if young people feel that they need further advice or guidance. This empowers young people to use technology and social media safely.

Young people demonstrate confidence and assertion in expressing their views and they regularly participate in young people's meetings. The registered manager immediately addresses any concerns raised and provides young people with verbal feedback. Young people confirmed that they know and understand how to make a complaint. Although they have not felt the need to use it, they said that they are confident that the manager and staff would resolve any potential issues. For example, one young person said that he had requested a young people's meeting, as he was unhappy that he had to ask for towels because there were never any left in the bathroom when he wanted to use them. Discussions took place in both young people's and staff meetings and an agreement was reached with all involved. This demonstrates that young people feel that their complaints are listened to and that the manager takes all complaints seriously and investigates concerns in a timely way.

The staff team understands and embraces young people's individual circumstances and behavioural needs. Proactive and imaginative approaches are used to manage behaviour. All behaviour management plans are consistently reviewed and updated. There is clear involvement by young people who are encouraged to express their views, wishes and feelings. An environment of high praise and warmth promotes good behaviour. Negative behaviour is addressed through good, consistent care and firm boundaries from the staff group. There have been no sanctions used in the home and no incidents of physical intervention. One young person said, 'Staff talk to us if we make a mistake and get us to think about what we might do differently next time. It's better, as where I lived before I was always

getting punished and it didn't stop me doing it.'

There have been no allegations made in the home, but staff confidently outlined the procedures that they would follow should any safeguarding matter arise. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and one member said, 'It's our role to protect our young people and, if issues arise, it doesn't matter if it's a colleague, the manager or the director, I will always report my concerns to the right people.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
A dynamic, experienced and suitably qualified registered manager has been in post since 2007. He provides exceptionally effective leadership that unmistakably prioritises young people's welfare and focuses on improving their lives. An extremely stable, committed and competent staff team responds enthusiastically to his expectation that it will deliver outstanding care to complex and vulnerable young people. Young people clearly benefit from a placement that fully supports their emotional, safety and learning needs, and helps them to progress in leaps and bounds. Parents and professionals, involved in young people's lives, say that the home exceeds their expectations of the quality of care provided. Staff are supportive of their roles, and always contribute to a holistic approach to meeting all young people's individual needs. Placing authorities are equally complimentary about the home, and say that staff are highly skilled in offering safe, individualised and outstanding care to young people. Staff receive regular, effective supervision and oversight of their practice. They are accountable in their work with young people. They receive regular training and development. In addition, the manager carefully considers any new areas of research to improve practices in the home. This continues to promote a culture of learning and development. This is crucial to improving care and outcomes for young people. The registered manager does not have to call on the services of agency staff. The existing staff group meets any shortfalls in the rotas caused by sickness or holidays. This ensures that young people receive consistency of care from those with whom they have established relationships. Furthermore, staff effectively use both handover and team meetings to promote a consistent approach to working on a daily basis with all young people. Staff ensure that all information about young people's daily routines, activities and plans, including any significant changes, is discussed in detail with all care staff so they are able to	

respond constructively.

Staff maintain excellent quality records, which capture each young person's journey through care. They include the views of young people and their families. They share information appropriately with relevant stakeholders. This ensures that all parties have an understanding of the young people's lives, their experiences and plans for the future. The highly effective partnership working that the home promotes underpins the excellent progress that young people are making.

Rigorous quality assurance systems are further improving young people's outcomes and safety, as well as sustaining a high standard of care in the home. Progress is tracked through detailed and evaluative monthly monitoring by an independent visitor. In addition to this, the registered manager collects the views of young people in regular individual meetings with them. They see him as central to their lives and speak warmly of him and the efforts he makes on their behalf. Because staff focus on individual need in a highly skilled and consistent way, the development of the home continues when those living in the home change.

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 whom 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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