

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	06/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC065789
Type of inspection	Interim
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	06/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The registered manager has taken effective action to meet the recommendation from the last inspection. All case records are now signed and dated by the author and there is regular monitoring in place to ensure that this is completed. All young people reported that they are 'really happy' in the home and that they have staff they can talk to. Young people said that the staff 'really care' and that they are all positive about each young person's achievements. One young person said, 'I can't believe I'm back at school full time. I now join in with activities and the biggest thing is that I've learned that I'm not always right and everyone is entitled to their own opinion.' In addition, young people have aspirations for their futures. They all talked openly about 'going to college to get a good job', 'working as a care worker' and having 'a career in computers or engineering'. As a result, young people's confidence and self-esteem has improved and they are settled and making significant progress. Staff continue to use their knowledge of excellent childcare practice to provide personalised, well-planned and effectively reviewed care. Professionals involved in the lives of young people say that staff work hard and make sure that young people achieve their individual potential. Parents were all extremely complimentary about the staff team, the support they have received as families and the achievements of their children. One parent said, 'They [the staff] have been fab and really changed our lifestyle, even as a family. [Name of young person] is doing so well, I am so proud. He is learning respect, is much calmer and extremely happy.' Since the last inspection, two young people have been supported to move into their own homes. They have both continued to attend their education and work placements, and maintain regular contact with the staff who cared for them. One young person spoke to the inspector and said, 'I could not have done this without the ongoing support from the staff. They have always pushed me and really helped me to understand I can do things if I put my mind to it. I cannot thank them all enough.' Two new young people have since moved into the home. Transition plans were carefully thought out. The young people had the opportunity to visit the	

home and spend time with the other young people and staff, and were able to participate in fun activities outside of the home. This helped them to start building positive relationships with the other young people and the staff, prior to moving in.

Staff encourage young people to try new activities and leisure pursuits. These are well planned and have appropriate staffing levels. Furthermore, these activities and pursuits ensure that the home continues to provide opportunities for young people to gain new experiences and increase their social skills. For example, young people have been supported to access the local gym to improve their fitness and emotional well-being. Young people have been go-karting and have been on trips to theme parks; they have had meals out at local restaurants and they enjoy visits to their local football clubs. Young people said that they are able to choose new activities that they would like to try, and this helps them to feel that they are listened to and supported by staff.

Young people actively contribute to decisions about daily living. House meetings provide a very positive forum that enables young people and staff to plan meals, identify activities and discuss specific issues that relate to group living in the home. Furthermore, young people make a positive contribution to their local community. They help local neighbours by tidying their gardens or carrying their shopping. One local neighbour wrote about a young person who recently left the home, 'It has been a pleasure living next door to him for many years. We have watched him grow from a boy into a mature and caring man. He is a credit you all [the staff] and to himself.'

Staff have created a nurturing, warm and homely environment in which young people feel valued, cared for and respected. However, this is undermined by the poor maintenance of some areas of the home. In particular, one young person's bedroom was unclean. There was stained flooring; there were a number of dirty plates in the room; and there were tobacco stains on his cupboards. There were also computer games and DVDs in his room that were rated as being suitable for people aged 18 years. Staff had failed to address this with the young person. During the inspection this was brought to the attention of the registered manager and the staff, who acknowledged that this was not a standard that they found acceptable. Although staff took immediate action to rectify the issues that were raised during the inspection, the home's daily routine had not enabled them to take effective action sooner.

Individual risk assessments and compatibility assessments do not always detail all risks or reflect the strategies that are in place to minimise harm. For example, one young person's file contained assessments from their previous placement. This was confusing, as plans provided conflicting advice and it was not clear which plan should be used. For example, one plan said that the young person was not allowed to go out in the community and must be immediately reported missing if she did so. However, the other plan indicated that she could go out with friends.

Consequently, staff do not always have access to comprehensive risk assessments

that inform them of all potential risks and the action that they must take to keep young people safe. So far, this has not had any impact on young people's safety, as staff know the young people well and update each other verbally at daily handovers. However, this would not support safe practice if the home had to use staff from other homes, or bank staff, who would not be familiar with the young people or the safeguarding practices in this home. The registered manager took immediate action to update the files and acknowledged that this was an area for further improvement.

The registered manager and the staff team clearly understand the ethos and vision of the home. They regularly review the strengths of the service and identify areas for ongoing improvement. The registered manager is very committed. He has ambitious, but achievable, plans in place to ensure that the service continues to progress.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good
26/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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:

- Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. 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 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7). In particular, ensure that all young people's bedrooms are clean and well maintained.
- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements that are in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-day-basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)

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 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 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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