

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC066115
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Alliance Care & Education Limited
Registered provider address	Brow Top Farm, Quernmore, Lancaster LA2 0QW

Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	Martin Evans
Inspector	Mark Kersh

Inspection date	02/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Young people have continued to make good progress since the last full inspection. The management team and staff have clear visions and aspirations for the young people in their care. Collectively, young people confirm they are happy and settled in the home. There were four young people in placement during the inspection. Young people are positive about the relationships that they have with the staff and with each other. They trust the staff and are able to talk to them. Individually, young people say: ■ 'I feel the staff do listen and will sort anything out for me quickly.' ■ 'The staff are really great, really helpful and easy to get on with.' ■ 'There are always plenty of things to do that I enjoy. Everyone gets on with each other.' This demonstrates that young people continue to enjoy their experiences and that they are continuing to make progress. Staff spoken to during the inspection demonstrated a very good understanding of the young people's needs and how these are to be met. Staff have the young people's best interests at the heart of their work. For example, young people are supported by staff to maintain contact with their families and other people who are important to them. Staff liaise well with social workers to determine how this contact is arranged and what support is required. All young people are engaged in education. Two young people attend the organisation's on-site school and two young people are being educated in mainstream schools. Their attendances are very good, and all of their achievements are celebrated. Young people's individual talents and interests are well promoted. Weekly singing lessons continue for one young person, another is involved in army cadets and other young people enjoy regular horse-riding lessons. Engagement in purposeful activities is high, including visits to a dry-ski slope, ice-skating, cinema trips, and membership and use of a local gym. Young people are active in their local	

community.

Following the last full inspection, three young people have moved on and two young people have joined the home. For young people leaving the home, managers and staff work with partner agencies to secure appropriate services which meet young people's ongoing needs. For one young person, a change in behaviour illustrated the need for a specialised provision. The registered manager advocated strongly on their behalf to ensure the placing authority secured the required package of care. Two young people moved back to their placing authority as planned.

Careful consideration is given to the referral information and the presenting behaviours and needs of potential new residents. A robust compatibility risk assessment procedure is followed to minimise any negative impact on the existing group of young people living in the home. Young people confirmed that they have received information about the home on their arrival. This information includes a process for young people to follow should they have any complaints about the care they receive in the home. Young people are clear about how to use this process, and feel confident that they would be listened to.

The staff are qualified, trained in safeguarding procedures and skilled. Young people feel safe and well cared for. The staff team is consistent in its approach and engages with young people effectively. Behaviour requiring physical intervention is uncommon and sanctions are used sparingly. Staff focus on helping young people understand the effects of their behaviour and how this impacts on others. Key-working sessions, incentives and rewards are used effectively to help young people discuss their behaviour and reflect on how they can moderate negative behaviours. Young people feel engaged in this process.

The significant decrease in risky behaviours can be seen in the home's records. Staff assess individual risks, and complete risk assessments which inform them on how to manage identified risks. There have been no incidents of young people being missing from the home. Young people's risk levels are mostly assessed as being low, with no risks relating to alcohol or drug misuse, child sexual exploitation or criminal behaviours. Staff recognise the triggers that cause young people to engage in self-harm. The use of effective strategies, including one-to-one work to identify the cause of these behaviours, means that incidents are reducing.

The three requirements that were made at the last full inspection have been met. New staff confirm they received a full induction into the home. Staff say they are well supported by the management team in the home at all times, and that their supervisions and appraisals are completed regularly. The home's statement of purpose document has been revised and sent to Ofsted as required. Improvements to behaviour-management records now show that staff and young people will have an opportunity to discuss any measure of control used.

The two recommendations that were made at the last full inspection have been

met. There are now arrangements in place to ensure the deputy and senior managers have access to information, for monitoring and inspection purposes, in the registered manager's absence. In addition, the independent person's reports are now available in the staff office. This ensures any areas for improvement, if required, can now be actioned by staff.

A programme of redecoration has been completed. The home provides young people, staff and visitors with a welcoming, warm and pleasant environment. The young people's bedrooms are personalised to their own tastes.

No requirements or recommendations are made at the inspection.

Information about this children's home

- The home is registered to accommodate four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The home is privately owned.
- Young people living in the home have the opportunity to benefit from therapeutic services. When appropriately identified in their care plans, each young person has time allocated as part of the weekly planner to work with a therapist and to engage in the many forms of therapy, as outlined in the home's statement of purpose document.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/08/2016	Full	Good
11/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/05/2015	Full	Good
16/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 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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