

SC066115

Registered provider: Alliance Care & Education Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered to accommodate four young people who, according to the home's statement of purpose, have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Since the previous inspection the home has been acquired by Keys Childcare. An experienced and qualified manager took up his post in December 2017. His registration with Ofsted is almost complete.

Inspection dates: 14 and 16 May 2018

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: 6 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2017	Full	Good
02/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/08/2016	Full	Good
11/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) 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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. (Regulation 45 (1))	15/06/2018

Recommendations

- Managers, through their auditing duties, should ensure that all records linked to behaviour management are fully completed before signing them off. With particular reference to ensuring that the time of return is always recorded in missing-from-home records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are living in a home that is experiencing a period of change. The home has been taken over by another company and a new manager has been appointed. Despite this, the consistency of care has been well maintained by a group of staff who know and support the young people well.

A number of young people are currently experiencing difficulties in their lives, caused in the main by factors that exist away from the home. Staff are working hard to support them through these difficulties. Relationships in the home remain strong, allowing young people to explore their feelings and work through their issues in an environment that is both supportive and safe.

Staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people. They show tenacity and commitment in challenging other professionals to ensure that young people's rights and needs are being addressed.

High staffing levels allow for individual interests and activities to take place. Full use of community facilities is a feature of the activity programme. Shared experiences between staff and young people during recreational times support their strong relationships.

All young people have full-time educational arrangements at various community-based schools and colleges. The logistics of getting them to and from their education on a daily basis is well managed by staff who are willing to use some of their own time to make this successful. Attendance levels are high, and this is reflected in the progress that young people make educationally.

The individuality of young people is reflected in their planning documentation and risk assessments, and in the strategies that are used to work positively with them. Documentation is revised and updated regularly to keep it current. The individual work that is carried out with young people gives them a sense of direction, and helps them to plan for their own futures.

Young people make good progress in developing skills that help them as they become more independent. Staff seek young people's views and opinions to help young people to make choices and contribute positively to certain aspects of life in the home.

The home is a little worn in some areas, but provides a homely environment with room to relax. Young people confirmed that they personalise and take responsibility for their own bedrooms, which help to reflect their identity.

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

The home accommodates some young people who have long histories of unsafe behaviour. Staff work supportively and constructively to help them manage their emotions, understand risk and learn how to stay safe. Due to the home's strong working relationships with safeguarding agencies, young people receive multi-agency support that helps to keep them safe.

Some young people have gone missing from the home recently. The energetic and coordinated response of staff, who are skilled in following and retrieving young people quickly, contributes significantly in reducing the number of incidents taking place. Although appropriate records are maintained, the times that young people return home are not always recorded.

Behaviour management is well managed overall. Serious behavioural incidents and physical interventions are rare. Staff are skilled and confident enough to rely on their relationships with young people, rather than adopting a punitive approach.

The home is moving towards adopting a more therapeutic approach. Access to specialist resources is improving. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep young people safe, based on their training and their knowledge of young people's individual needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager is beginning to have a positive impact on the home. He has introduced a number of new initiatives that are designed to develop the staff group and improve outcomes for young people. The ethos and culture of the home are changing. The manager is supportive of staff as they adapt to the changes in place and to those proposed for the future.

The formal staff supervision and appraisal programme is an area of significant improvement. A new format to implement and record them has been introduced. This is designed to make staff feel better supported as change takes place. Some staff remain apprehensive of change and how they may be affected. The manager is fully aware of this and is working hard to provide the right levels of support needed.

The manager has produced clear plans to develop the home and ensure continued improvement. This is underpinned by the internal and external monitoring of the home, which is ongoing. However, linked to recent changes, the manager's own six-monthly review regarding the quality of care has exceeded this timescale.

In the relatively short time since the last inspection, the home has experienced a lot of change. The manager came into post with a clear remit from the previous owners. Due to the change of ownership, that remit is under review. As a result, some areas of development have not yet taken place.

More changes to the home are expected, including an increase in specialist resources available for young people. The manager and staff are receiving good levels of support from senior external managers.

Some changes within the staff team are expected. However, the care provided to young people remains stable, with the majority of the staff group remaining intact. Despite the issues affecting some staff, young people appreciate the strong relationships they have with a committed staff team.

The two requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection have all been addressed in full.

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 differences 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 whom 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: SC066115

Provision sub-type: 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: Lee Wignall

Inspector

Graham Robinson, social care inspector

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