

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066115
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Alliance Care & Education Limited
Registered person address	Brow Top Farm Quernmore LANCASTER LA2 0QW
Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	Martin Evans / Scot Thomas Wilson
Date of last inspection	12/11/2014

Inspection date	16/02/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None.

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

A new manager has been in post since November 2014 and an interview took place as part of this inspection to assess the new manager's fitness for registration. As a result of this interview, a recommendation of suitable has been made. The new manager is eager and enthusiastic. He has the relevant qualifications and experience for the role of a Registered Manager having previously held this position in other children's homes.

The manager has taken time to assess the functioning of the home and has devised a clear and robust short term development and action plan focussing on areas identified for immediate improvement such as considering staff skills and training needs. This demonstrates the manager's commitment to improve standards of care and outcomes for young people.

The one requirement and two recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. There is now a delegated system within the management team to ensure all staff receive regular supervision. Formal consultations with young people and their families now take place weekly with any issues arising being considered and responded to. A new bathroom door lock has been ordered to replace a bolt lock, should staff need to gain access in an emergency situation.

Staff encourage young people to attend education. Where there is resistance, staff persevere and strive to hold a line to maintain a regular daily routine. Where there are delays in enrolling young people into education beyond the control of the home, staff proactively advocate for young people. They liaise with other agencies to ensure this remains a priority. In such instances, young people are engaged in the on-site school. This ensures that young people do not fall behind and understand that their education and development is important.

Young people respond positively to staff who know their needs well and are attentive to them. They describe a nurturing and committed staff team, who they can rely on for regular, reliable guidelines. There are no current behaviour management issues and all young people say they get on well with each other. There are no incidents of bullying or intimidation. Young people say that they are, 'pleased' with the care provided, and 'it's good here, I like the education' and all young people say they feel safe and have no concerns about this home.

Staff establish positive relationships with the young people and their families. They are knowledgeable about the young people and their agreed arrangements for contact. Young people enjoy contact with significant family members and friends in and outside of the home. Staff promote positive contact. As a result of these agreed contact arrangements, young people have significantly reduced their absences and are less likely to place themselves at risk.

Extended contact arrangements have been made and agreed for some young people during this half-term week. Other young people are enjoying a range of planned activities and outings with the staff.

The home is at full capacity. Since the last inspection one young person has had a planned departure and two young people have arrived, of which one was an emergency placement.

The manager has implemented a range of improvements in relation to the monitoring of the home. This includes regular monthly reports which identify key actions, areas of progress and an evaluation of young people's outcomes. There is a more robust compatibility risk assessment and the manager is not afraid to challenge placing authorities where information on young people has not been shared with the home. This ensures clear plans of care are implemented for individual young people who are placed at the home in an emergency.

The inspector was aware during this inspection that a serious incident, which occurred in a school setting, is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. However, at that time there was a significant delay in reporting this to the local authority designated officer. The new manager has re-enforced the procedure with staff to ensure any allegation or suspicion of abuse are reported promptly to effectively safeguard young people.

There is a real commitment from the management and staff team to further raise the standard of care provided to the young people who are living in the home. They have a clear vision and realistic aspirations for the home and in achieving positive outcomes for the young people.

One recommendation has been made at this inspection in relation to staff working effectively with other agencies concerned with child protection.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2014	Full	good
13/03/2014	Interim	good progress
24/09/2013	Full	adequate
26/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the registered person and staff work effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child protection e.g. the local authority designated officer. (NMS 4.7)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.