

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066458
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pebbles Care Limited
Registered person address	Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane Kirkstall Leeds West Yorkshire LS5 3BT
Responsible individual	Luiz Miguel Guilherme
Registered manager	Jane Wilson
Date of last inspection	27/01/2014

Inspection date	04/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people flourish in this home because of the excellent level of individualised care they receive from staff. They develop very positive relationships with staff and over time this helps them to settle, to feel valued and to grow in confidence. Consequently, they make good progress in all areas of their lives. Young people achieve in education, they enjoy good health, their behaviour improves and they learn the practical and social skills that will sustain them in later life.

Young people report that they are happy in their home. They say that they get on really well with the manager and staff team and they recognise and value the support they are given. One young person said, 'I get everything I need from staff. They always care about me and help me when I got problems' and another young person said, 'The manager said to me we are all really proud of you - that helps me to try harder'. Relatives and professionals are also very positive about the way young people are cared for and the progress they make.

Young people are safe and feel safe in their home. Staff understand their vulnerabilities and work effectively to ensure that they are safeguarded. Young people's behaviour improves as a result of the way staff work with and support them. They are helped to talk about and resolve difficulties that arise within their group and as a result they report that bullying is not an issue.

The home is managed effectively. The manager and assistant manager ensure that staff are appropriately trained and are well supported in their work. The progress of young people is regularly monitored and action is taken on any issue that is identified in order to improve the quality of care young people receive.

One recommendation has been made as a result of this inspection. This relates to the need to ensure that all risk assessments are signed by staff to confirm they have read and understood them. This shortfall has no negative impact on the positive outcomes achieved by young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The registered provider is a limited company. This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental disorders excluding learning difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2014	Interim	good progress
30/05/2013	Full	good
06/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/08/2012	Full	adequate

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 that the quality and adequacy of record keeping is monitored and take action when needed. Specifically, ensure that all staff promptly sign all risk assessments to confirm that they have read and understood them. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people who live in this home make good progress in all areas of their lives. They enjoy long-term settled placements and they develop good relationships with staff. The positive reinforcement that they receive from staff and the attachments they develop, enable them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. This helps them to achieve positive outcomes.

Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They have developed a good understanding of health issues. They benefit from eating a healthy diet. They do not smoke or use alcohol or drugs. This has a positive impact on their general health. Young people are supported at routine health appointments. Those young people who need this service have prompt access to the child and adolescent mental health team. This means that they have support with mental health issues and that there is good oversight of their emotional well-being.

Some young people take regular medication. The arrangements for managing and administering medicines are extremely robust. This ensures that young people are protected and have medicines when they need them to support their physical and emotional health.

Young people have an identified education provision that is appropriate to their individual needs. They attend very regularly and are therefore able to make good progress overall. Some young people make excellent progress in education, improving their levels of attainment significantly in some subjects. Some young people have successfully completed college courses and others are working for examinations that will help them to move on to college. These achievements in education enhance young people's opportunities in later life.

Young people learn the practical skills they will need when they leave care. They also develop social and emotional skills that will help them to live independently. Young people have plans in place for their future life and talk about the work that they would like to do as adults.

Young people take part in activities that promote their health and encourage them to develop their interests. For example, some young people enjoy playing rugby, going for walks and on trips to local leisure facilities. They also enjoy activities such as going to the cinema, having meals out and going on shopping trips with staff. Some young people have learnt to swim since they have lived in the home. This has benefitted them physically and given them a sense of achievement. All young people go on holiday with staff during the summer months. They report that they really enjoy these breaks.

Young people have a clear understanding of their history and their background. This is supported by maintaining contact with relatives and also through discussions with staff. This promotes their sense of identity and supports their emotional well-being.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people benefit from the excellent care they receive from staff. Managers and staff show a strong commitment to the young people they look after. They have very high aspirations for young people and support them really well to help them achieve their full potential. Young people know that staff are genuinely interested in their welfare and want them to do well. They relate very positively to staff and feel confident about approaching any member of staff for support. One young person said, 'Staff really help. They always make me feel positive' and another young person said, 'It's really, really good here. Staff are brilliant'.

Staff have a very good understanding of the young people they look after. Care plans are drawn up between staff and young people. They are detailed and holistic, reflecting all areas of young people's needs. Young people are fully involved in all aspects of the care planning and reviewing process. They confirm that they have agreed the content of their plans with staff and that they attend and contribute to their reviews. Young people report that they are also involved in discussions about the running of the home. They attend house meetings where they talk about issues that have arisen in the home and things such as activities, menus and holidays. As a result of these arrangements, young people understand that their views influence their individual care plans and the general running of the home. In turn this helps to promote their sense of self-esteem as they know that they are part of all the decisions that are made about their lives.

Staff are very enthusiastic about the importance of education. They have an excellent knowledge of local education resources and they work very effectively with schools and colleges to ensure that a suitable education placement is identified for each young person. Staff have developed very good daily routines that help young people to establish a pattern of regular attendance. Staff attend education meetings to ensure that they have up to date information about young people's education plans. Where a need is identified, staff support young people in class. Young people who have struggled to engage with education before they came to the home have been helped to settle in school. As a result they have been able to improve their levels of attainment.

Managers and staff have built very effective relationships with professionals from a range of agencies, such as the child and adolescent psychology service, education teams, primary health care services, adult care teams and sensory services. They work in close partnership with these agencies. This ensures that young people have good access to resources they may need and that there is a consistent approach to

young people's care. Professionals make many positive comments about the quality of care that young people receive and about how staff work with other professionals. For example one professional said, 'Our young person has stabilised and thrived in their care. The staff help facilitate meetings and maintain good communication' and another commented, 'All staff are very child-focused and the needs of the young person I review are very effectively met with appropriate services in place'. Relatives also report that young people are cared for very well and that staff keep them fully informed about their child's well-being.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is safe, comfortably furnished, well maintained, warm and welcoming. The manager makes sure that any damage to the home is repaired promptly so that young people can take a pride in their environment. The home is suitably located in a residential area. Young people have good access to public transport. This enables them to travel independently to school, college, shops and leisure facilities. This is an important part of their preparation for independence. Young people themselves say that they really like the home. One said 'It's just like a normal family home'. They enjoy decorating and personalising their rooms to reflect their personal tastes.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home's robust safeguarding arrangements ensure that young people are cared for safely. There are clear policies and procedures to guide staff and to ensure that they work safely. Staff are trained in safeguarding including in issues surrounding the sexual exploitation of children. Staff confirm that the training is regularly refreshed so that they are able to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to manage and report child protection concerns so that young people are protected.

Young people report that bullying is not an issue in the home. They say that staff help them to resolve any difficulties that arise between young people. They report that they feel 'very safe' in the home and that staff give them good advice about safety in their community. They feel confident about talking to staff if they have a concern and they know that this will be acted on. One young person commented, 'Staff always try to keep the home a safe, calm place for us'. Professionals and relatives also confirm that they feel young people are cared for safely.

Staff have a very good understanding of young people's vulnerabilities. They develop individual risk assessment plans and support strategies that confirm how staff should work with young people to keep them safe. Plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain up to date and relevant and continue to protect young people. Not all plans have been signed by all staff to confirm that they have read and understood them. However, staff practice shows that they follow risk assessments, which promotes safe practice. Young people understand their plans. This helps them to see how staff are working to keep them safe.

Young people do not feel the need to go missing from the home. They understand the importance of keeping staff informed about their whereabouts and usually return to the home at the agreed time. On the very rare occasion that a young person does not come back to the home when they are expected, staff follow the agreed procedure to secure the young person's safe return. They search for young people in the vicinity and contact their friends and family to try to ascertain their whereabouts. They have developed very effective links with the local police and safeguarding team. They share information about vulnerable young people appropriately with these agencies to support good partnership working and promote the safety of young people.

Staff work hard to help young people to learn to behave in ways that are socially acceptable. They actively promote and reward positive behaviour through praise and incentives. Some young people's behaviour is very challenging when they first arrive at the home. As a result of the way staff look after them and the relationships that they have with staff, their behaviour improves over time. Staff are trained in behaviour management techniques including in safe physical intervention. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort when it is necessary to protect young people and staff. Incidents are fully recorded and the manager monitors the reports to assess the effectiveness of restraints and ensure that the welfare of young people is promoted.

The home is kept safe for young people, staff and visitors. This is achieved through a system of health and safety risk assessments and checks on equipment. Individual evacuation protocols have been developed for vulnerable young people which all staff understand. Young people confirm that they have practised fire evacuation procedures so they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Young people are protected by the home's robust staff recruitment practices. These ensure that staff are properly vetted before they start work in the home. Visitors to the home are also checked before being allowed in. This contributes to protecting young people from unsuitable individuals who may try to gain access to the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home is managed effectively, ensuring that young people are safe and well cared for. The manager is registered with Ofsted. She has a National Vocational Qualification at Level 4 in care and is currently working to gain the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care. She has a number of years' experience of working with young people in residential care. She has managed this home for over three years. The manager is ably supported by a qualified and experienced assistant manager who ensures that the home continues to run smoothly in her absence. The managers work closely with two senior care workers and as a management team provide strong leadership to the care staff.

Robust management monitoring arrangements ensure that there is good oversight of the care given to young people and the progress they make. The manager and deputy are very clear about the strengths of the home and about the areas they are looking to develop. They ensure that they maintain their knowledge of new legislation and changes in social care practice and that this information is passed on to care staff. The manager strives to ensure that the home continues to improve for the benefit of young people. She regularly seeks the views of young people, their parents and professionals about care in the home and uses feedback from this consultation to drive improvements. The requirement and recommendation that were made at the last inspection are both met. The restraint records evidence the actions staff have taken to avoid the need to physically intervene with young people. Records also confirm that young people are given the opportunity to be medically examined if they have been restrained. This promotes their welfare. The manager monitors these records closely to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep young people safe.

Care staff are competent. Those who have worked in the home for some time are all qualified. Newer staff are working to gain the Level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. They report that they are able to access regular training in order to develop and maintain their knowledge and skills. Staff are extremely enthusiastic about their work with young people and they feel that morale in the team is 'excellent'. They have a very positive view of the young people they look after and value them as individuals. Young people know this and they are equally positive about the managers and staff who look after them. Young people said 'Staff are brilliant' and 'the manager is the best ever'.

Care staff report that they are well supported in their work through regular meaningful supervision and informal discussions with managers and senior staff. They also feel that good handovers and frequent team meetings enable them to provide a consistent approach to young people. This in turn helps young people to do well. Staff are keen to maintain a 'family orientated' home for young people. This nurturing approach has helped young people to feel settled and valued and to thrive.

Parents, young people and professionals have access to detailed information about how young people are looked after in the home. The statement of purpose accurately describes the ethos of the home and its structure. There are two versions of the young person's guide which ensures that young people have information about the home in a format that is appropriate to their needs.

Staff keep detailed information about young people that supports their understanding of their history and their time in this placement. Young people are encouraged to read and contribute to their records. This ensures that they understand what is being written about them and that their views are captured. All information is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant to young people's emerging needs. Records are stored securely to protect young people's right to confidentiality.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.