

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC066916
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Elaine Cooke
Inspector	Elaine Allison

Inspection date	12/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC066916

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress in their lives through living at the home. They grow in self-awareness and, over time, learn to manage their emotions, and to develop positive and trusting relationships with others.
- Young people experience care that focuses on their individual needs and builds on their strengths, talents and interests. Staff are attuned to the impact of previous life experiences upon young people, and provide nurturing and holistic care.
- Staff are committed to the progress and welfare of young people, whatever the challenges that young people's behaviours may bring. They are given positive and affirming messages about their self-worth and value to others.
- Over time, young people develop aspirations for their futures and value the role that education brings to their lives. The frequency and prevalence of harmful behaviours that the young people exhibit diminish.
- The staff team and managers work very collaboratively with placing authorities, parents and other agencies. All feedback gained during this inspection was very positive. Such positive multi-agency working has led to improvements in the emotional well-being, social skills and educational achievements of young people.
- The staff team is highly motivated and committed to the young people. Both staff and managers are fully focused upon providing care that is reflective of young people's needs and flexible in its approach.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
40: Notification of a serious event (4) The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child— (i) is instigated; or (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (5) A notification made under this regulation— (a) must include details of— (i) the matter; (ii) the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and (iii) any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; (b) must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e), (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	29/08/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 29, paragraph 5.19)

- Ensure that the behaviour management strategy be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. This relates to ensuring that all recordings of incentives charts are clear, concise and record the reason why a young person has failed to achieve agreed incentives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people, who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/06/2015	Full	Good
23/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make very good progress in all aspects of their lives. Their experiences through living at the home are rewarding, and nurture their emotional growth. They are given sensitive responses that are well informed and thoughtful with regard to their backgrounds, temperaments and strengths. They feel listened to and that staff care about them. A staff member said, 'I try always to be kind and show kindness and fairness and to lead by example.' This level of emotional literacy shown by staff has enabled young people to open up and explore areas of their lives which they feel worried or anxious about, and to do so in a safe environment. As a result of the good-quality care and role modelling that are given, young people learn to appreciate others' views and share their thoughts and feelings in an acceptable way. Young people learn to trust the adults who care for them and, through this, they begin to talk about what is difficult in their lives. A young person said, 'This is the best place that I have lived in. All the staff are like family, they listen and really care about us, so it makes me want to do well for them as well.' Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of the young people in their care, which enables good tailored responses to individual young people. For example, staff have liaised with a youth offending service to negotiate on behalf of young people with regard to fulfilling their Reparation Orders. Young people have engaged in a mentoring programme at their college and the registered manager has negotiated these hours to be included as part of their orders. A youth offending worker said, 'Staff in the home are really supportive and I am glad that the young people are doing some really meaningful work towards their reparation, it's a breath of fresh air working with professionals who have the young person's best interests at heart.' This means that young people are encouraged to help others in their education provisions and ensures that they fulfil their obligations set out in any court orders. Young people who have experienced significant trauma and present with complex and challenging behaviours grow in self-confidence and can express themselves positively. They are treated with respect and are enabled to channel their skills and abilities into achievement and significant improvement. This has led to significant decreases in risky and sometimes dangerous behaviour, such as drug taking and missing episodes. A parent said, 'It's a relief for me because my son was going missing for up to a week at a time, it was very worrying. Don't get me wrong, he still sometimes goes missing but not to that extent. It is a good place for him: they	

are keeping him safer.'

Young people make significant emotional and social progress. Interactions between the staff and young people are warm and considerate, and observable attachments exist. A placing social worker is able to confirm that the young person is 'settled and happy and it shows he is making progress by the very fact he engaged in his planning meeting.' A staff member said, 'I take pride that young people who leave here always return to say hello, this is because I believe we make the home a home and not a unit.'

A stable, diverse and mature staff team, with a good breadth of knowledge and skill, provide a consistent approach to care and behaviour management. This stability has resulted in young people living in a home which they describe as 'not like a children's home, just feels like home', 'like one big family'.

All young people have an identified educational provision. From their starting points, young people make good progress in terms of their academic abilities, willingness to attend and understanding of the role that education plays in their future lives. A young person who had been out of education for a period of 18 months was recently awarded 'most improved student'. All young people living within the home have over 90% attendance at school or college. The shortfall in their attendance is mainly made up of periods of illness or their attendance at professional meetings with regard to their care planning.

Young people's education is fully supported by the staff, and there is regular information sharing between the staff and education professionals. An education professional said, 'The communication between us and the home is second to none, they tell us in the morning if there are any issues that may affect the young person during their time in college and we do the same at the end of the day.' This liaison ensures that young people receive consistent messages and approaches. When young people struggle to attend, the staff are proactive in talking to young people and developing support plans to ensure that they continue to achieve. An example of this includes sourcing additional tutoring sessions for a young person.

Young people are well supported with their individual health needs, and staff follow detailed healthcare plans. Care, encouragement and attention to detail are given to all aspects of young people's health, including the quality of meals, attendance at appointments and access to professional services. Examples include referrals to agencies for smoking cessation. This has resulted in young people having very good health outcomes.

Young people are given the opportunity to experience fun activities that support the positive use of leisure time, and that provide positive shared experiences with staff and other young people. Activities include snooker, fishing and football training.

The home, in the main, is well decorated and arranged to meet the needs of the

young people. Young people are encouraged to make their bedrooms their own and there are good-sized communal spaces for young people to enjoy.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people's risks are thoroughly understood by the staff, and continuous support is given to young people in order to reduce the risk that behaviours pose to others and themselves. Suitable levels of supervision, challenge and focused activities support young people's safety. Staff maintain clear and consistent boundaries that provide young people with a sense of well-being. Young people say that they feel safe in the home, and that they can talk to staff about any worries or concerns they may have. Comprehensive care planning, risk management procedures and behaviour management plans provide clarity about how staff are to support young people in a time of crisis and reflect the positive staff practice. The staff make excellent use of a range of assessment tools. In doing so, they ensure that their approaches and methods of communication capture and consider young people's views, opinions and wishes. As a result, young people remain central to the planning and development of their home. An example of this includes an individual risk assessment for child sexual exploitation, which is updated on a monthly basis. Staff have also received training in radicalisation and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are trained to recognise signs and maintain a sceptical outlook. Training has given staff the confidence to remain vigilant and work preventatively. A staff member commented, 'The radicalisation training was really good, it gave us the confidence not to see the young person as the problem but to look beyond certain behaviours and see it from a protective angle.' Staff have a calming influence when young people become anxious or struggle to manage their behaviour. Behaviour management plans have useful de-escalation strategies that support young people. Young people agree to the consequences given, which are all around minor issues. Consequences are proportionate and not a punitive punishment. A young person said, 'It's fair because we must have done something wrong, we all get treated the same which is good and we get rewards for when we are good.' The home operates an 'incentive' scheme for good behaviour which works very well and young people have engaged fully in the scheme. However, the recording of the incentive scheme does not always clearly indicate the reasons for the targets set for young people not being met. Some young people, for whom going missing from home was a feature of their	

lives, experience a significant drop in the frequency of these episodes. When young people do go missing, staff are prompt to follow protocols and to liaise with other agencies. They go looking for the young people, checking with friends and family, and search the local area. A police officer said, 'The home is excellent at looking after young people who have a significant history of being missing, they manage on the whole to reduce this. They work very closely with us and go above and beyond what other homes do.'

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for young people out in the community and in the home. These outline potential risks, along with strategies for staff to manage these safely. These are reviewed monthly and amended if needed. Staff understand the importance of young people managing certain risks, according to their age and understanding. The manager and staff team have an excellent understanding of the individual risks relating to each young person. They use effective risk plans to identify risk and to develop strategies to support the young people.

Admissions to the home continue to be well organised and a high level of consideration is given to the appropriate mix of young people. Risk assessments and pre-placement meetings show that admission decisions are carefully considered. This includes both the current young people and the new young person. A social worker commented, 'The pre-planning was very good, it was very refreshing to see that it was what it stated it to be, a caring good old-fashioned children's home that strived and achieved the feeling of a comfortable, safe, happy and having a very homely feel.' Young people who move on from the home are very well supported. For example, a young person who was moving to live with foster carers was supported by staff to have overnight stays prior to moving in full time with his foster carers. This demonstrates that compatibility and individual needs are considered to be of high importance.

The physical environment is safe and protects young people from accidental injury. Health and safety processes are robust. Each young person has a detailed individual risk assessment that staff understand. As a result, the home is able to take all necessary steps to reduce the likelihood of young people being at risk of harm. Environmental risk assessments accurately reflect identified risks and potential hazards. Young people and staff understand fire safety systems and how to respond if emergencies occur. The safety of young people is promoted further through good environmental health and food safety processes.

Risk assessments and key work sessions are in place for young people with regard to e-safety. However, there is not a computer within the home which is exclusively for use by the young people. This means that young people living in the home do not have the same opportunity as their friends living in the community to access e-learning or social media sites.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A motivated and committed registered manager, who has high expectations and aspirations for young people, effectively leads the home. She is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake her responsibilities. Her qualifications include a diploma in social work and an NVQ level 5 qualification in management. She leads by example and is actively involved in all of the home's operations. This enables her to monitor everyday practice in the home as she works alongside colleagues and young people. Young people and staff speak highly of their manager. The manager understands the needs of young people and is accessible to them. Her presence is felt within the home. One police officer commented, 'She really cares about what happens and makes sure she and her staff do everything to protect the young people.' The staff do very well in providing young people with a safe and motivational environment where there are good levels of care and support. The staff team is diverse. The members of the team have a range of life experiences and qualifications, are skilled in working with the young people, passionate and compassionate, receive good training and are supported by their senior managers in their sometimes difficult roles. All members of staff spoken with gave positive comments about the manager's supportive leadership of the service. The staff and manager have established strong working relationships with a range of agencies and professionals who are involved in young people's care. Staff work closely with schools, colleges, social workers, health professionals and leading child protection agencies. Feedback from all stakeholders is positive, praising staff's commitment, young people's progress and effective communication with the manager and her team. Staff are given regular, good-quality supervision that supports and challenges practice in order to improve the care given to young people. This is further supported by reflective team meetings and young people being at the centre of those discussions. Staff comments include, 'We communicate very well as a team', 'It's a very happy place to work staff support each other', 'I am very confident in working with my colleagues' and 'We are gifted with the team, we have such a different backgrounds, we have experience in abundance'. The manager ensures that staff are involved in the monitoring and development of the service. Their views are sought during monthly service reviews, team meetings and individual supervision sessions. Consequently, the team feel valued, respected and supported and this is reflected in the good standard of care provided. Staff have individual development plans within which their training needs are	

identified and met. All of the staff are either trained to the minimum professional level or are in the process of working towards this.

The manager uses testimony from young people, information from professionals working with the home and complaints to learn lessons with a view to improvement. This informs the home's development plan, which is focused on maintaining a high-quality service. Areas identified for improvement are actioned, which means that the home does not stagnate. As a result, young people receive services that the registered manager is constantly seeking to improve through using quality assurance processes.

Significant events involving young people resident in the home have been shared with placing authorities. However, they have not been reported to Ofsted. A failure to share information with all relevant people compromises the safety and welfare of young people. Furthermore, the regulator is unable to carry out its monitoring function to ensure that all appropriate action is being taken by the provider to safeguard young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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