

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066916
Inspector	Elaine Allison
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Elaine Hilda Cooke
Date of last inspection	20/02/2014

Inspection date	23/09/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This home meets young people's needs to a good standard. Young people's plans are highly individualised and demonstrate that the staff are aware of and meet young people's diverse and complex needs. Equality and diversity are clearly valued and promoted in the home. Difference is enjoyed and celebrated and each young person's individuality is promoted to a very good standard.

Social workers comment that staff are proactive and communicate effectively with them. A social worker commented "the home are very good at keeping in touch with us, especially around risky behaviour, they work very well with us and other professionals to reduce the risks". This ensures that a consistent approach is provided when caring for the young people.

Staff demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of most risks young people face, and work hard to ensure those risks are minimised and safely managed. They work well together and use the diverse attributes and skills they have to complement each other. This in turn allows them to offer good support to the children and young people.

There is very good communication between the service and external agencies which ensures a consistent approach is provided when caring for the young people. The

young people being cared for within the home have very good personal plans that demonstrate real insight into their diverse needs, including their health and wellbeing. Staff use these plans to enable the young people to build positive relationships which will assist them to make choices that will keep them safe and provide them with opportunities for meaningful inclusion within society.

The service provides an environment where education is a central component of the personal planning and positive outcomes for the children and young people. Strong links between the education base of the provider and staff ensure continuity to support the young people to realise their own potential and promote their self-esteem.

Creative management and leadership have created a positive culture that supports staff and has built collaborative relationships with agencies and stakeholders. This supports young people in achieving positive outcomes.

As a result of this inspection, areas of development include ensuring that all areas of the home are clean and that arrangements are in place for ensuring the physical environment is safe and secure. The front door of the home was left wide open and therefore not secure from unauthorised access and all visitors to the home did not sign into the home.

Ofsted have not received reports from the provider about the conduct of the home within the appropriate timescales.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people aged 10 to 17 years, who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2014	Interim	good progress
31/07/2013	Full	good
30/10/2012	Interim	good progress
25/04/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
33 (2001)	provide a copy of the independent person's report to Ofsted (Regulation 33 (9) (a))	10/11/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are secure from unauthorised access. This relates to the front door of the home being left open, visitors to the home failing to sign in and therefore not secure from unauthorised access. (Regulation 31 (1) (b))	10/11/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take

account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide a comfortable and homely environment which is well maintained and decorated, in particular ensure that the carpets in the communal areas are clean. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The majority of the young people are engaged in education and are making good progress. Young people are fully involved in their education choices and as a result, they maintain good attendance at school and other educational settings. This ensures that young people are able to develop academically and achieve in line with their peers. A social work manager commented, 'the manager is very proactive in getting education placements for young people. Only this morning an education placement broke down and the manager has already sourced an alternative provision to ensure the young person continues towards GCSE's'.

Young people form trusting relationships with staff and this enables young people to discuss any worries or concerns. A parent commented 'they do a really good job in sometimes very difficult circumstances. I know that X has formed really good relationships with staff and this will help with the issues that are ongoing'. A young person said 'I can talk to some staff and this helps with my temper'. As a result, young people feel safe and emotionally secure in the home.

Where appropriate to do so, young people maintain close contact with their families. This further ensures that young people develop emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their backgrounds. A parent commented, 'I have regular contact with X and staff help us to maintain that contact'.

The health of young people is good. All young people benefit from easy access to appropriate medical services and receive appropriate care and treatment from appropriate services where necessary. Where young people require help with developing their personal care routines, they make good progress in this regard. As a result, young people develop their independence and increase their self-esteem.

Young people are fully involved in day-to-day decisions in the home. They contribute their views through regular meetings and constant communication with staff. This helps to ensure that young people have ownership of decisions made in the home and that they can start to take personal responsibility. Young people commented 'we can decide what activities and things we do', 'we get a say in most things'.

Young people receive positive care which promotes their independence. They engage in practical skills such as cooking, washing and budgeting to prepare them for later life. Staff make sure young people are well prepared and confident about their future plans. This helps them to make important choices and move successfully on from the home.

Quality of care

good

Children and young people are cared for by an experienced, motivated and supportive staff team. Staff have built a good rapport with young people at the home and are caring and responsive to their changing needs. Young people say that staff listen and understand. A young person commented 'the staff are great I can go off on one really quickly and be horrible to staff but they always treat me really well and they don't judge me or hold grudges'. Staff spend time with young people individually. As a result they benefit from growing relationships and attachments. Young people are regularly consulted about choices such as activities and food.

Staff consistently encourage young people to reflect on how negative behaviours can hurt others. This practice proves effective as young people show improved ability to deal with conflict appropriately. Young people with significant emotional and mental health challenges receive good support from staff. They receive a calm, practical and safe response to complex emotional challenges and occasional risk taking behaviours.

The staff understand the needs of each young person well and know how to help each young person get the best out of life. The day-to-day work carried out with young people is of a good quality. There are high levels of respect, compassion and an acceptance of other's difficulties and differences. Needs relating to equality and diversity are recognised, met and celebrated by all living and working in the home. Racist language is quickly and effectively challenged by staff. Consequently the young people learn to respect others and develop an understanding of the potential consequences of using inappropriate language.

Young people have gone missing from the home for quite long periods of time. However staff are knowledgeable about the procedures to follow and make frequent and consistent efforts to find young people and are welcoming when they return. The police missing persons co-ordinator commented 'the home is excellent at keeping in touch with us and if they identify any serious risks for young people they quickly share their concerns'. Consequently professionals are able to work together to safeguard children and young people.

Medication is safely stored and carefully administered. Detailed records of medication are routinely checked for accuracy. This ensures that any errors are quickly identified and promptly resolved. The staff team promote the health of young people at all times. All medical appointments are up to date and the staff team are diligent in ensuring that young people attend. As a result, young people enjoy good health and any concerns are quickly resolved. Young people are encouraged to develop their emotional well-being because they benefit from regular, high quality discussions with their key workers. As a result, they form strong attachments to the staff team and are able to discuss a range of feelings, worries and concerns.

Complaints from young people are rare. Where they do occur, they are appropriately addressed and resolved. As a result, young people know that their concerns are

listened to and acted upon. A young person commented 'I made a complaint and they dealt with it really quickly. I was impressed and felt like they took me seriously'.

Detailed records of key working discussions are held securely in the home. This ensures that staff are able to work consistently and know of any matters affecting the progress that young people make. A social worker commented 'they work really well with young people who present very challenging behaviour and use good strategies which are consistent to address the behaviour'.

The home is spacious and well-appointed. Young people take pride in their surroundings. Young people commented 'it's a nice house to live in', 'I like my bedroom' and 'I like chilling in the living room'. This enabled young people to have a sense of belonging. However, some areas of the home are in need of refurbishment, in particular the carpets in the communal areas are stained and require replacing or cleaning.

Young people enjoy access to local amenities and there is a range of age-appropriate activities for young people to enjoy. These include football, trips to the local park and gym activities. This helps young people build positive peer relationships, increasing their social networks and integrating in the community.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say they feel safe in the home and staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of child protection procedures.

Each young person has a detailed behaviour management plan in place. This contains the strategies needed to encourage positive behaviour. These plans are effective and young people's abilities to manage their own behaviour have improved as a result of their successful implementation.

The home's recording system is appropriate and ensures that should restraint occur, all appropriate details can be recorded. Positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded in the home. Where sanctions are used, they are fair and proportionate. A young person said 'it's fair because usually we deserve it because we have done something and we should get sanctioned'. This ensures that young people are encouraged to display and maintain socially acceptable behaviour.

The home has clear protocols with the local police should a young person go missing. Very good links have been established with the police missing persons co-ordinator which ensures a speedy co-ordinated response to any missing episode, reducing the risk for young people. Staff discuss with young people the reasons they may go missing, such as wishing to maintain contact with their local communities, and do their best to resolve these. When young people do go missing, staff take immediate action, including liaising with the police, to ensure young people's welfare is

protected and they return quickly and safely. Staff do their best to balance risk management with providing young people with appropriate individual levels of support and supervision. They remain vigilant to identify and record emerging risks to young people.

When serious incidents occur, the staff team ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of young people. Furthermore, all required serious incident notifications are made to the appropriate services. As a result, young people's safety is promoted at all times.

Risk assessments outline what measures need to be in place to support the young people in their environment, in the community and in various activities. These ensure that the welfare and safety of the young people is not compromised and is maintained to a good standard. Regular fire drills take place at both day and evening times. This ensures that young people and staff are practiced in safe evacuation. All areas of the home are safely maintained and appropriate checks ensure any defects are identified and resolved. This ensures that young people's health and safety is appropriately promoted in the home.

The arrangements for ensuring the physical environment is safe and secure and that young people and staff are protected from potential harm are not met. In particular, the front door of the home was left wide open and therefore not secure from unauthorised access and all visitors to the home did not sign in or out of the home.

Managers maintain robust recruitment and selection procedures that help prevent unsuitable people from having access to young people. Managers carefully induct and support new staff into their role to ensure they acquire the skills necessary to care safely for young people.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2011. She is suitably qualified to undertake her responsibilities, with a diploma in social work and an NVQ level 5 in leadership and management.

This is a very well-managed home. An experienced manager works effectively to ensure that all members of staff buy into the culture and ethos of transparency, good childcare practice and addressing and celebrating the differences in young people. This enables young people to maintain and retain their sense of identity.

The Registered Manager works together well with a committed and long standing staff team. The manager has an excellent working knowledge of young people's care needs. The Registered Manager is passionate, committed and dedicated to providing high quality care and this is reflected in the approach and work of the staff team. Young people report that the Registered Manager is 'fair' 'easy to talk to' and 'cares

about us'. This provides young people with a consistency of expectations and boundaries.

The home is very good at responding to complaints. The complaints procedure is used very positively by the manager to ensure the views of young people, their families and other stakeholders are acknowledged and respected. The manager is a very effective advocate for young people, able to influence decision-making processes in placing authorities and encourage decisions that are in the best interests of young people.

Practice is assessed and reflected upon in supervisions, team meetings and by the compilation of monitoring reports. This enables shortfalls to be addressed or areas to be improved. For example, by analysing routines for young people and developing strategies when trigger points for distressed behaviour have been identified.

Regular training is provided for all staff to ensure that they are knowledgeable about their role and have the skills and competencies to fulfil it. Additionally, all staff members receive regular supervision to provide them with day-to-day support in their role and to promote their professional development. Members of staff feel very well supported and that the team work in the home is excellent; 'We work well as a team and the constant staff team is good for the young people,' is a comment made by a member of staff. This support is also underpinned by regular staff meetings which enable everyone to reflect on practice and the effectiveness of the service.

Overall, the home's written records are completed and audited to a good standard, being stored with due regard for confidentiality. The well-structured files and care plans give a very good oversight of each young person's progress and history of their time at the home. The registered manager undertakes a monthly quality assurance check of all files. These processes are effective and enable the management team to identify areas for improvement.

The manager regularly monitors the operation of the home, the quality of care and outcomes for young people in partnership with young people and the professionals who support them. This ensures the ongoing safety of the young people who live in the home. However, the independent person has failed to submit reports of monthly monitoring Regulation 33 visits to Ofsted. The quality of the monitoring by the independent person is not evaluative and does not lend itself to being used for improvement.

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.