

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC067895
Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Lisa Marie Speight
Date of last inspection	02/01/2014

Inspection date	07/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the homes last inspection.

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 and professionals say that this is a very good home. The supportive environment that this home provides enables young people to make good progress. A detailed behaviour management plan, with therapeutic input ensures that young people receive individualised care. As a consequence, staff understand the uniqueness of each young person and provide care tailored to meet their needs. Young people say that excellent relationships with staff are the basis for their improving behaviour.

The home is efficient in ensuring that young people are not only kept safe, but also develop the knowledge and confidence to keep themselves safe. Excellent liaison with external agencies ensures that young people receive good levels of support in all aspects of their lives.

Purposeful links have been developed between the home and the educational establishments attended by young people. The home is excellent in ensuring that young people gain educational provision quickly. In addition to this, young people are prepared to enter further education. As a result young people have aspirations for their future.

Young people are given opportunities to experience new activities and learn new skills and are encouraged to challenge previously held attitudes; this enables them to grow as individuals and develop their self-esteem.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this home. Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. The young people actively recognise this. They consider the home to be a very good one that keeps them safe and meets their needs.

Areas for the home's development include ensuring that care plans are updated; young people have access to the internet; their friends are welcomed into the home; all documents are signed by the author; the structure of young people's files are clear; and their emotional health needs are identified within their health plans.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is run by a partnership company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/01/2014	Interim	good progress
17/04/2013	Full	good
28/01/2013	Interim	good progress
26/06/2012	Full	good

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
11 (2001)	make proper provision for the welfare of children accommodated there. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the local authority care plan is updated with relevant information. (Regulation 11 (1) (a)).	02/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that information within young people's files is stored correctly,

which will be helpful to a child when accessing their files (NMS 22.5)

- ensure that records are clear. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that the author and manager sign the relevant documents within the home (NMS 22)
- ensure that young people have access to social media and are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet (NMS 4.4)
- ensure that young people are encouraged to make and sustain friendships. Including being able to make reciprocal arrangements to having friends visit the home (NMS 7.6)
- ensure that young people's emotional needs are promoted. This is specifically in relation to including their emotional resilience within their health plan.(NMS 6.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people have been at this home for a significant period of time. This has given them a sense of belonging. They have been able to build excellent relationships with staff and they were able to reflect on how this stable and consistent care had impacted on them. One young person said 'I have been here for years and I am a different person now. This is because staff have taken the time to listen to me, explain things and have given me good advice.' Relationships between staff and young people are excellent and young people were keen to relate that they felt respected, valued and well cared for. Young people stated that they had confidence in the staff team who look after them.

Young people living in this home are activity encouraged to make positive choices and to use every opportunity to develop and reach their individual potential. Individual placement plans have been developed that recognise young people's individuality. However, one young person's local authority care plan has not been updated for a significant period of time. For example, one young person's health needs significantly changed over a year ago and this has not been included within the plan. This does not ensure that all parties are aware of the changing needs of young people. In contrast to this, the home's placement plan clearly identifies these changes. Young people said that they were fully included in the home's placement plan and they could influence the care that they received.

The home actively acknowledges racial, religious, gender and other differences and encourages open discussion and learning on such issues. Young people are assisted to develop a healthy sense of self and to recognise the rights and feelings of others. This enables them to more easily engage with the wider community. However, young people say that staff have different views on whether their friends are allowed into the home. One young person thought it was a company policy that friends were not allowed in. This does not ensure that young people can sustain friendships or reciprocate arrangements when visiting friends' homes.

Young people are proud of their achievements and that they have excellent attendance at school. Both young people proudly said they had recently passed entry exams to do formal exams this Easter. One young person said 'I got pupil of the term before Christmas. I received a certificate and I also got to pick a reward for doing well.' Young people proudly display their certificates on their bedroom wall and the home keeps a photocopy for their memory boxes. Young people acknowledge that education is important and say that staff encourage not only their regular attendance, but also offer practical support helping with homework. Young people spoke with the inspector about their forthcoming appointments and interviews for college placements. One young person said they wanted to be a sports coach and another wished to join the police force. Therefore, young people have aspirations for their

careers and future.

Staff actively engage with young people about a range of health-related issues this results in consistent improvements to health and fitness. Appropriate support from medical professionals is provided and a high level of liaison takes place between staff and these professionals to ensure young people's health needs are fully met. Young people, where appropriate, benefit from a comprehensive therapeutic programme which is tailored to meet their individual and often complex emotional needs. As a result, placement plans and behaviour management plans are developed with therapists to ensure that individual, needs, care and responses are given consistently. But the ongoing emotional health needs, progress or support required has not been drawn from professional reports into young people's health plans. Therefore, their progress with emotional resilience is not recorded. This is not currently impacting on the excellent health care that young people receive but has the potential to do so. Young people confirm that staff support them to attend medical appointments and that all health issues are dealt with promptly. Young people's good health and well-being is successfully promoted because staff are knowledgeable and aware of each individual young person's needs.

Young people say that their views, wishes and feelings are captured at tea time and through young people's meetings and key worker sessions. For example, they say that they take an active part in menu planning and meal preparation. Young people say: 'The food is good and we each have an opportunity to choose items on the menu and we can have other options if we do not like the main meal.' Young people continued to say 'having to talk about your day at tea time is a bit boring but it does give you the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns as they arise. So I suppose this is good.' They were also able to reflect that this is what families do.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact, in line with their placement plan, with family friends and other people who are important to them. Young people are supported by staff wherever necessary during family visits. Placement plans and contact records make explicit the authorised arrangements for contact between each young person, their family, friends and their social workers. Young people said that they were not allowed access to social network sites. One young person said 'because another young person inappropriately used the internet, the company has a policy of not letting us use them. It is not fair.' This means that there is a reactive approach to young people accessing social network sites. This does not ensure that young people are treated as individuals or that they have the skills and knowledge to access them safely. In addition to this, some young people are placed a long distance from home and they say that this hinders them, in being able to stay in touch with family and friends.

There has been some excellent outcomes for young people who have left this home. A young person who was reaching adult age has recently moved into foster care. Staff say this is unheard of given their age but it was their wish and with excellent planning they were able to make this come true. They continued to say 'we worked

with this young person and a range of professionals for over a year to find the right foster carers for them.' Another staff member said 'It shows how excellent planning works. They are really happy and settled. In fact, they came for Christmas dinner with us and it was great seeing them so happy and listening to all of their accomplishments.'

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people in the home are appropriately placed there. Young people's needs are assessed appropriately and placement plans outline how these needs are met. They contain good records which are updated appropriately and include all relevant details regarding young people's needs. Staff complete records which include information about care, diet and support given to young people. Young people are consulted and contribute fully to their plans and know what they are working towards. The excellent support provided by key workers encourages young people to work through difficulties and address the key areas in their plans. The staff team believe that they place the welfare of each young person at the centre of their care and by encouraging relationships based on trust, honesty and respect leads to a mutual understanding, therefore this enables them to work with young people to reach their full potential.

The approach to planning is excellent. There is exceptional and effective multidisciplinary working. Staff ensure they work closely with other professionals such as therapists and education. Innovative and creative strategies are developed to ensure that children make progress in every area of their lives. For example, excellent structure and routines are provided in everyday living. Irrespective of the challenges they present, young people's well-being and individual achievements are at the centre of all practice. As a result, young people work towards achievable goals and their interests are fostered and built upon. This improves young people's confidence in their abilities and improves their self-esteem.

The strong, committed staff team has consistently high aspirations for the young people in their care. They work strenuously to develop positive, constructive relationships with young people. They provide opportunities for them to share their wishes and feelings. A member of staff said: 'We actively listen to young people and ensure that they are fully involved in their care and planning. Sometimes it may not be possible to do everything they ask for but we ensure that they understand.' Young people enjoy warm, productive relationships with staff and each other, even if they are not always in agreement with the boundaries. One young person said: 'The staff are great. You can ask them anything.' Another young person said: 'I can talk to anybody about absolutely everything and know I won't be judged.' This effectively promotes self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. An independent reviewing officer said; 'The care of my young person is excellent. They are nurturing and non-judgemental. The investment that staff put into young people shows in the relationships they have.'

The home offers young people a wide range of activities and encourages them to pursue their own particular interests. One young person said 'I do something different every day. I go to the gym, I am in the cadets, I play football and rugby and I also volunteer at the local youth club.' Another young person said 'I don't really like going on activities. I prefer to 'chill out' or be with my friends but the staff give us loads of opportunities and will look into anything which we would like to do. Sometimes it is not possible but they will always consider them.' Young people told the inspector of a recent visit abroad to a theme park. They discussed this holiday with fond memories and photographs were retained for their future. This gives young people the opportunity to have new experiences, learn new skills and have the same opportunities as their peers.

Young people's health needs are prioritised and young people have regular access to health services specific to their needs. Health promotion is a prominent feature at the home. For example, excellent partnership working with health professionals means the home provides holistic care for young people. Records of appointments with health professionals are clearly maintained. Medication is securely stored within the home and designated staff are trained to administer medication safely. Clear records are maintained for the administration of medication and staff are vigilant in checking medication dispensed, ensuring accurate and up-to-date records are maintained.

Young people say that since the introduction of tea time talks, that they have not raised any concerns since the home's last inspection. They say staff do their utmost to act on or elevate anything raised with them. They also understood that staff may not always be able to act upon their requests but were very confident that they would try or ask other professionals to help. The young people's guide to the home gives comprehensive information about a variety of external organisations that they can contact if they wish to complain outside of the care organisation. Staff say that young people's views, wishes and feelings are of paramount importance to them. One staff member said 'It may only be a small thing to us but it may be huge for them. Therefore, we do everything in our power to resolve it.' Another staff member said 'We welcome concerns or complaints because this helps us to develop our service. If we don't know something is wrong we can't change it.' As a result, young people say that the complaint system is clear, accessible and that they have other people that they could talk with if they had a concern. Therefore, young people receive exceptional individualised support, which stems from staff's intuitive understanding of each young person's needs. This means they are able to provide effective guidance and reassurance to young people to help reduce any anxieties or worries they may have. Professionals say staff are very good advocates for young people and are positive parental role models.

Young people's educational needs are extremely well supported and highly valued. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people. Young people talk enthusiastically about the support they receive from staff with regards to their education. As a consequence, young people are achieving within education. Staff

ensure that young people are ready for their day, are interested in how their day went, and support young people by assisting them with homework and by celebrating any achievement or progress they make. Staff liaise with schools and attend any meeting or significant events. Thus young people feel that they are fully supported within education. Staff support young people to develop their knowledge, skills and independence by offering appropriate advice, encouragement and by being good role models.

Young people live in a very comfortable and homely family house in a residential neighbourhood. It is close to shops, public transport, schools and community amenities. The house is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and clearly reflect their individual tastes and interests.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people confirm that they feel safe within their home. They felt that the staff do their utmost to ensure that they understand all potential risks. Although they do not like some of the restrictions placed on them, can appreciate the steps taken to promote their safety. Staff have access to clear information, support, guidance and advice about child protection and safeguarding requirements. Staff understand their responsibility to protect young people and are able to demonstrate what actions they would take to keep young people safe. Staff are confident about their responsibilities and know what to do if an allegation is made about the home's manager or another member of staff.

The privacy of young people is respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people's care records are maintained securely and contents are not discussed inappropriately. Staff are aware of those young people who enjoy quiet time in their rooms. Staff ensure that they do not enter young people's rooms without knocking. A good balance, however, is achieved between respecting young people's wish for privacy and ensuring their safety. Young people are protected from bullying by the vigilance of staff who are guided by clear policies and robust training. Young people and staff know that bullying is not tolerated. Young people receive clear messages that bullying behaviour will be challenged and that these issues are discussed openly within the home to ensure everyone is protected. No young person identified bullying as a problem at the time of the visit and one young person commented, 'staff are really good at dealing with any bullying issues and we discuss any concerns within our young people's meetings or through key worker sessions.'

The home follows the local authority's policy and procedures regarding young people who leave the home without staff permission. The home has established very good protocols and reporting systems with the local constabulary and with the local safeguarding board. The manager has been proactive in calling strategy meetings and visits by social workers when a child has been missing on a number of occasions. Young people confirmed that they are actively discouraged from having unauthorised

absences and the home's records demonstrate that procedures are consistently followed. Good individualised assessments of risk have been formulated in respect of unauthorised absence, which are reviewed frequently. Young people say that they are responded to positively on their return and staff are concerned about their safety and welfare. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in young people going missing from this home.

Young people are encouraged to behave well, to establish, achieve and maintain levels of behaviour that are socially acceptable and that will sustain them in the wider community. Staff are acutely aware of the need to balance their interventions with positive feedback about young people's achievements, rather than on just punishing poor behaviour. Young people say that sanctions are fully discussed with them and they often choose their own sanction. They said this was a fair way of doing things. Staff say this gives them the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and identify a suitable consequence. Young people feel that the use of physical intervention is appropriate and understand that it is only used for their or other people's safety.

The home has established systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. All services and utilities are inspected regularly. Fire safety is given appropriate importance and fire drills are carried out routinely. This means that young people and staff know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team. The home has a robust recruitment policy and practice. All visitors to the home are monitored and sign in and out of the visitor's book. These systems acknowledge the importance of the young people's safety.

Leadership and management

good

A flexible, enthusiastic and dedicated manager manages this home. She has been registered with Ofsted for three years. She has the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and 4. She is awaiting final sign off of her Level 5 in Leadership and Management. Her experience has been gained over nine years within the company. She started with the company as a residential worker, progressing to a senior and then as a deputy manager. There is good leadership and management support because the Registered Manager provides effective leadership to the staff team and young people. The staff team are highly skilled, qualified and dedicated to improving outcomes for young people. The commitment from staff is a strength and most absences are covered from the existing team, or cover staff, who are already known by the young people to ensure their continuity of care. All staff spoken to on the inspection said they enjoyed coming to work, that they had a strong team who are committed to ensuring the safety and good outcomes for young people and that they thought that the training offered and support given was very good.

The Registered Manager is actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the home

and has clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. One young person said, 'our manager is great and we can talk to her at any time'. The good management of this home contributes significantly to the positive impact on the care and support young people receive. Good communication is a feature of the home, which enables staff to be well informed about daily events, routines and the progress of each young person.

The provider meets all of the aims and objectives in the home's Statement of Purpose. Staff are well supported within the home and staff meetings are held regularly. Staff duty rotas and the manner in which staff are deployed confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. Staff consider that the manager involves them in decision making and they feel that their opinions are valued and that they are encouraged to speak out if they have concerns, particularly in respect of young people's care or welfare. This means that young people experience a consistent approach that is personalised to meet their individual needs.

Good systems are in place to monitor the service and daily lives of young people currently living in the home. The organisation has established a pattern of management monitoring and reporting procedures, which is effectively implemented by the home's registered manager. These monthly inspections look at welfare issues within their homes and findings are reported back to the company and shared with the inspection service. Records seen demonstrate that the content of these reports reflect an accurate picture of life for young people resident in the home.

The Registered Manager actively monitors and evaluates the practice standards of staff and the quality of services being provided and the impact the home is having on the care of young people. Training programmes covering mandatory requirements are carried out at induction and continued through regular refresher training. This ensures that all staff are up to date with new legislation and guidance. Monthly staff meetings take place to ensure consistent messages are conveyed to the team. Staff are supervised regularly which means that they are supported in their work with young people and also that their work is monitored. They say that communication within the team is very good. This promotes consistency of care for young people.

Visits to young people by their placing authority are regular, as are statutory reviews in which young people actively engage and contribute. This ensures they can influence decisions in relation to their current and future lives. Significant events are reported appropriately, the home is quick to report any concerns to the appropriate authority, to safeguard young people and protect them.

Young people enjoy a good strong and trusting relationship with the home's staff and the manager. The home's coherent philosophy, clear shared values and strong management combine to ensure that each young person is valued and nurtured. The detailed planning of each young person's care combined with the effective use, when appropriate, of external professional support ensures that each young person, not only have their identified needs met, but are encouraged to achieve their full

potential.

The manager maintains a good overview of key documents, policies and procedures in order to ensure practice is current, relevant to young people's needs and accountable. The views of young people, parents and professionals are routinely captured to continuously improve day-to-day care and promote achievement. A good development plan comprehensively outlines the aims and objectives for the year. In addition to this, an excellent location risk assessment outlines any potential, immediate or known risks within the local and surrounding areas. Therefore, the manager is able to make an informed decision on any referral to the home and their compatibility in being able to meet young people needs safely.

Young people's files are not well structured because old documents have not been archived, thus making the file cumbersome. Several documents were not stored in the identified sections. In addition to this, some paperwork was not signed by the manager or by the author. For example, the manager did not sign the home's report for the young person's review. This does not ensure that staff have the most up-to-date information, it is not helpful to young people when they read their file and does not ensure that all parties are in agreement with the plans in place.

There were two recommendations made at the last inspection. These have been met. The home was asked to review the safeguarding policy to include procedures and guidance to e-safety and to ensure staff had training in e-safety. All staff were familiar with the policy and understood through training, how to put this into practice. The manager and staff said that the training was very good and the manager has put a proposal forward, to the company because she feels that young people would also benefit from this training.

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.