

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	10 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC069474
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Erica Castle
Inspector	Paul Taylor

Inspection date	10 May 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

SC069474

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- This is a well-led children's home where the manager promotes high expectations for both the staff who work there and the young people who live there.
- Members of staff receive training and supervision which develops their practice and ensures that they have the skills, insight and knowledge to support the young people to a good standard.
- Staff provide excellent levels of support to enable the young people to improve their education outcomes and attendance.
- All members of staff know what to do in the event that they have safeguarding concerns regarding a young person. The registered manager works well with external agencies to ensure any concerns are pursued and resolved and this promotes young people's safety.
- Young people have excellent, trusting relationships with members of staff and this leads to an atmosphere of mutual respect and a genuine feeling that the staff want what is best for the young people.
- The staff and manager work closely with all stakeholders, especially parents and placing authorities, and this leads to consistency and a strong sense of collaboration to improve the outcomes for the young people.
- Young people's emotional well-being is promoted to a high standard and this helps them to feel safe enough to develop insight and reflect on their experiences. This enables them to strengthen their resilience and learn positive coping strategies.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that no measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child – imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation (Regulation 19 (2)(f)).	30 June 2016
Ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. This is in relation to ensuring that conversations about consequences and restraints are accurately completed and contain meaningful information. (Regulation 35 (3) (b)(i)(ii)).	30 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This is in relation to ensuring that key work or restorative sessions are clearly recorded and that members of staff use appropriate language when completing records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4.)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home offers accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30 September 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10 June 2015	Full	Good
19 February 2015	Full	Good
3 September 2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people develop caring and trusting relationships with members of staff. 'This is one of the most caring places, the staff know what to do about everything', said one young person. As a result of these supportive relationships young people are able to reflect upon their life histories and consider their responses and behaviours. In turn, this has enabled them to develop more positive strategies, strengthen their insight and resilience and make significant progress. Young people are confident in expressing their views and aware of how to make complaints if they wish. They have relaxed and open dialogue with staff and managers. This promotes and facilitates honest and frank discussions about how they feel that they are being cared for. Subsequently, there have been no formal complaints since the last inspection and any issues raised are dealt with at a low level. Considering their starting points, the young people achieve good levels of attendance at school. Members of staff promote the value of education and work extremely hard to help the young people to engage and attend. Communication with educational placements is excellent. Members of staff speak daily with the young people's teachers and visit the placements to support the young people if required. Additionally, teaching and pastoral staff are welcomed into the home to meet the young people and staff so that progress, achievements and targets can be openly discussed. This gives a very strong message to the young people about the value of education as well as actively involving them in the planning of their placements and taking responsibility for their engagement. The structure and support given to the young people assists them in making good progress in their educational placements. Young people are encouraged to take part in a variety of activities and interests in the community. This includes spending time with their friends, going on outings with staff and peers and joining clubs, such as the gym. This gives them the opportunity to be part of their wider community and enables them to develop their social skills and confidence. Young people receive good support to maintain their health and to lead healthy lifestyles. All necessary medical appointments are made and staff closely support the young people to attend these if they are unwilling to or find them anxiety provoking. As a result, young people's health needs are met to a good standard. Young people experience particularly well-planned and sensitive support in developing their emotional health and well-being. They have ready access to a therapist who in turn also supports and advises the staff team and parents, if	

appropriate, to nurture the young people's stability and emotional security.

Members of staff offer excellent support to the young people to maintain and facilitate contact with their families. Staff take young people to visit their families and provide sensitive supervision and help at the level needed by the young person. Additionally, staff and managers, as well as therapists, work with families to explore any issues so that their relationships can be improved. This process has been instrumental in enabling care plans to be followed, especially if the plan is to help a young person to return home to their family.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Members of staff work well with other professionals to ensure that the young people are safe within this home. Any concerns are raised and addressed quickly, strategies and action plans are effectively implemented to manage any risks. Clear procedures, which are implemented in practice, guide staff as to how each young person needs to be supported to be safe. This includes conscientious and effective responses to incidents where young people are absent without permission. As a result of staff tenacity in this area, incidents of young people going missing have virtually stopped. There has been only one incident in five months. 'I wasn't running away from here', said the young person involved. There are suitable arrangements which ensure that young people speak with an independent person after missing episodes. This means that they are able to voice their opinions about their care should the reasons for running away be related to their life in the home. External professionals, such as the local authority designated officer, and social workers are complimentary about the good level of communication from staff and the managers at the home. This effective collaboration promotes the young people's safety. Emphasis is placed upon young people learning about e-safety rather than an imposition of controlled access to the internet. The age of the young people and their own abilities have been taken into account in the process of enabling them to develop their knowledge and appropriate access to social media and the internet. Young people appreciate their responsibilities and there have been no incidents where staff have felt that the young people have been at risk. Challenging behaviour displayed by the young people is managed well by the staff team. The home bases responses to challenge on principles of 'Non Violent Responses.' This includes agreed strategies involving all relevant individuals in the young people's lives, especially during times of crisis and challenge. For example, a young person's non-attendance at school was successfully addressed by asking a wide variety of individuals to voice their concerns directly to the young person.	

This included staff, teachers, parents, youth workers and therapists. This sustained and well-planned intervention has had an excellent impact and enabled the young person to re-engage with his education.

The use of physical restraint is rare. All staff are trained in the use of restraint and this ensures that it can be applied safely. Records are examined by managers to make sure that they are accurate and that the use of restraint was appropriate. On one occasion, the young person's views were not sufficiently recorded and the planned sessions with staff to address the incident were not clearly documented. Although this was a minor incident, it does not meet regulations in this instance.

The recording of sanctions is inconsistent. Young people's views are not sufficiently recorded or addressed in depth regarding the use of the sanction. On two occasions, the sanction imposed was of a minor financial nature and did not relate to the misdemeanour. A requirement is made for the staff to address this issue. Overall, the effectiveness of sanctions is considered and discussed in team meetings to ensure that there is consistency in care and approach. Young people report that the rules are 'sensible' and that they feel fairly treated.

The behavioural approach and committed consistent care provided by the staff enables the young people to manage their emotions, develop insight and resilience and to feel safe and cared for. 'I absolutely trust them, no question', commented one young person.

Recruitment of staff is thorough and all necessary background checks such as checks with references and with the Disclosure and Barring Service are completed before someone can begin to work with the young people. This ensures that only adults with suitable backgrounds are employed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
An experienced manager is in post. She has over 29 years of experience working with young people and has achieved a level 4 diploma in Management, and Working with Children and Young People. The manager provides strong, clear leadership and this means the staff team feel valued and motivated. There are sufficient numbers of staff to provide the individual support which the young people need. Staff are trained and all, apart from the newest appointees, have achieved their level 4 diplomas in Caring for Children and Young People. In addition, the staff all receive training in areas such as addressing child sexual exploitation, identifying radicalisation, safeguarding, self-harm and working with autism. Staff are full of praise for the amount of training that they receive from the organisation and this lends itself to maintaining their motivation and confidence. 'One of the reasons I like working at this home is the amount of training I receive', commented a member of staff.	

The training of staff is underpinned by regular supervision which explores the impact of working with the young people in addition to ensuring that they are competent in their roles. Regular team meetings and group supervision sessions provide further opportunities for staff reflection on their practice and the quality of care that they are providing. Subsequently, the staff feel very well supported and they work well as a team.

The registered manager works closely with other professionals, particularly those from placing authorities and safeguarding agencies. For example, the registered manager was instrumental in ensuring that a strategy meeting regarding a safeguarding issue was arranged by the relevant local authority. Local safeguarding agencies report that the organisation works openly with them and informs them promptly of any concerns. This conscientious approach by the registered manager means that the young people trust in the advocacy the home provides and that relevant professionals feel that the home is providing a good service which acts in the young people's interests.

The impact on collaborative working with external professionals, the expectations of high standards from the manager, combined with good training opportunities and supervision, means that young people are supported to a very good standard. Subsequently, they make significant progress while living in the home.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager assesses the impact that new admissions may have on other young people in the home. This identifies actions to take if established young people have their progress compromised and if inappropriate mixes of young people leads to increased risk-taking behaviours. The recommendation made at the last inspection relating to this has been met.

There are monthly reviews of care undertaken by an independent person as required under Regulation 44. These reviews monitor the quality of care and identifies gaps. The registered manager writes an action plan to address any shortfalls identified during these visits. This ensures that the monitoring process has an impact and enhances the quality of care that the young people receive.

The home's statement of purpose is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and provides the information required to inform stakeholders of the service provided.

Staff do not always complete records to a consistently high standard and on occasion have not recorded events such as individual sessions or incident reports to the standard and in the detail expected by the organisation. Although these shortfalls are not common and have not compromised the quality of care or safety of young people, they have fallen short of professionals standards.

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 looked after children 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 that 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 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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