

## **Children's homes inspection – Full**

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>1 June 2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC356565</b>         |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Full</b>             |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b>  |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>  | <b>Millicent Vernon</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Millicent Vernon</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Elaine Cray</b>      |

|                                                                                                 |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>1 June 2016</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                    |

**SC356565**

**Summary of findings**

**The children's home provision is good because:**

- Some young people remain at this home for far longer than in previous placements and thrive because they make positive attachments and grow in confidence.
- Young people experience consistent care because the core staff team remains resilient and committed in the most testing of times. Young people experience stability, no matter how much they try to break down their placements at this home.
- Quality of care is effective, as staff pick up key issues in key working. Young people speak openly about their concerns and this helps their emotional and mental health.
- Effective partnership working between staff, police, missing from care co-ordinator and the public protection unit promotes a robust safeguarding response. Young people are safer, with no direct concerns regarding going missing and child sexual exploitation.
- Professionals hold the management and staff team in high regard. They say the staff are, 'persistent in trying to get what young people really need.'
- There are some shortfalls in recording and streamlining of the care planning and safeguarding framework. These shortfalls do not have a direct impact on young people.

## 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      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <p>8: The education standard:</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment</p> <p>(v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally.</p>                                                                                                                                            | 1 August 2016 |
| <p>23: Medicines:</p> <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safe keeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home (Regulation 23 (1)).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1 August 2016 |
| <p>35: Behaviour management policies and records:</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the date, time and location of the use of the measure and the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii)(vi)).</p> | 1 August 2016 |

## **Recommendation**

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

- Keep all children's case records up to date. This is with particular regard to daily records and incident recording ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date  | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 15 February 2016 | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 10 June 2015     | Full            | Good                    |
| 19 March 2015    | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 4 June 2014      | Full            | Adequate                |

## Inspection judgements

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people have good experiences and make significant progress across aspects of their lives and from their starting points. They live in good quality accommodation and say that the house is very homely, just like a normal family home.</p> <p>Young people are adamant that the staff are the best thing about the home. They consistently seek out staff for support and experience positive relationships and have a strong sense of stability.</p> <p>Young people experience highly individualised care and this gives them a good sense of belonging, particularly during periods of turmoil and aggressive behaviour. Highly committed staff and strong relationships mean that all young people receive positive attention even when they or others are struggling.</p> <p>They identify important improvements in their behaviour. Young people go missing less. Their relationships with staff enable them to talk about their worries and risk-taking behaviours. For example, some young people seek out staff to talk about the dangers of drugs, and how to seek support to stop taking drugs. Other young people are particularly proud about spending less time on computer games and not being angry when staff ask them to try something else.</p> <p>The manager and staff work hard to explore young people's backgrounds and needs. Young people grow in maturity because staff have great respect for their previous experiences and reasons for behaviour. They have an in-depth understanding of how historic neglect impacts on young people's self-esteem and their abilities to make attachments with others. Staff say this understanding enables them to 'go the extra mile' for young people. Staff's high regard for the mental and emotional health of young people is reflected in detailed key working sessions and the responses of young people in this inspection.</p> <p>Compatibility assessment and planned transition periods are crucial in assessing and monitoring matching between the young people who live at the home. While young people have very different interests, they get on well. Individuality is embraced by the staff and both young people receive support to pursue their own separate interests.</p> <p>Pre-admission visits and close liaison with social workers enable focused placement planning across all aspects of young people's lives. The care planning framework</p> |                 |

places safety and emotional welfare at the forefront of young people's support packages. Their care is regularly reviewed to ensure that the home works alongside the placing authority to meet and monitor young people's needs.

Staff maintain strong and interactive relationships with young people. Consultation is effective. For example, young people have good self-determination because they and staff discuss and agree activity planners each week. Keeping planners up to date and displayed is very important for some young people's visual reference. They are less anxious because they can check their plans and look to staff for reassurance.

Young people also respond well to the emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour. Young people acknowledge that they spend less time on the computer, keep their rooms tidier and swear less because they work hard to meet their reward targets.

Young people acknowledge that they may need to be held to keep them and others safe. They appreciate being given time and space to calm down. Young people are reassured that they can talk things through with staff, situations are resolved and relationships with staff remain positive despite instances of extreme and aggressive behaviours by young people.

Some older young people find engagement with post-16 year's education extremely challenging. They miss their old school and struggle with new and larger placements. The manager and staff do their utmost to facilitate young people's learning and this includes finding several Prince's Trust placements as an alternative to formal education placements. The manager also liaises with the local education authority and virtual head to challenge the lack of education planning and a suitable placement. Some young people's independent reviewing officers say that the home goes 'above and beyond' to seek out education placements for young people.

Staff try to use young people's time constructively by enabling young people to develop independence skills. Budgeting and cooking is supported by other practical tasks, like how to register with a doctor, in order to prepare young people for their young adult lives.

Despite constant requests from the management team, the local education authority is ineffective in allocating an appropriate placement to young people who have significant learning challenges.

In contrast, other young people attend school regularly and are proud of their achievements and new opportunities. For example, some young people are due to experience their first residential holiday with school. They work alongside staff, read letters from school and keenly make lists to arrange shopping trips in preparation for this new venture.



Young people's health improves as staff support them to engage with health agencies and address the impact of a history of neglect. Young people enjoy healthier diets and a range of activities and exercise. Their dental health is significantly improved. They put on weight, have clearer skin and no longer hoard or hide food as they enjoy regular and shared meals with staff and other young people.

Young people are learning to budget and cook healthy balanced meals. Independence planning covers a range of practical skills, but this focus on emotional development is essential in enabling young people to manage relationships and is key factor in their journey to become more independent.

Staff liaise with agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, to support young people with their mental health. While some young people are not always keen to engage, staff maintain positive connections in order to develop staff knowledge and to support young people in tackling substance use.

Robust medication procedures protect children's and young people's medical and health needs. Staff keep young people safe by monitoring the administration of prescribed medication when young people may have used other substances. There are some minor shortfalls in recording, as stating that the young person has refused medication is not strictly correct.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Judgement grade |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people are safe and well cared for due to a good care and safeguarding framework.</p> <p>Their individual risk management plans are clear about going missing and other risks, such as self-harm, aggressive behaviours, substance misuse and family contact. Clear strategies are in place and consistently implemented to minimise risk and to improve young people's behaviour.</p> <p>Young people are safeguarded with robust protocols and good liaison with partnership agencies. Local police say that the home 'effectively' manages young people who go missing from care, and good communication results in young people returning safely to the home. There is an effective response when patterns of missing from care become more serious. The manager is swift in meeting with the missing from care co-ordinator and safeguarding manager to ensure that the</p> |                 |

potential for child sexual exploitation is addressed and monitored.

Young people benefit from safe contact with family members. Staff work hard to embrace and maintain positive relationships with parents. As a result, parents with a history of poor relationships with social care services now liaise with staff to ensure that contact arrangements are agreed. This more consistent approach impacts on patterns of missing from care, as involved parties communicate about the whereabouts of young people and promote their safety more effectively.

Behaviour management plans are detailed and place the child at the centre of staff practice. Attention to detail is good and strategies connect to each individual young person. For example, some young people are significantly safer as staff closely monitor the age-appropriate use of computer games and the amount of time spent on computer and gaming consoles. They understand how staff will help them to manage their behaviour. Strategies such as individual reward charts enable young people to break down each day into a series of manageable targets. They grow in self-esteem because staff are quick and enthusiastic in the praise and rewards they give.

Some young people's behaviours are significantly challenging and may require physical intervention as a last resort. A debrief with the young person is an integral part of behaviour management, and this allows young people to reflect on their behaviour and to closely monitor staff practice where physical intervention has been used.

Staff training in behaviour management promotes safe practice when positive reinforcement and reward does not work. Talking about behaviours and restraint helps young people to understand how their behaviours can impact on the safety of themselves and others. There is little reliance on the police to manage difficult situations. Discussions between young people, social workers, youth offending workers and staff give young people good opportunities to rectify challenging behaviours, to make amends and to avoid criminalisation.

Records, however, lack some detail and accuracy. There are inconsistencies in recording that could lead to potential shortfalls in safeguarding young people. However, the shortfalls have no direct impact on young people.

There are no current concerns about bullying at the home. Compatibility assessment places the potential for bullying as a high priority and promotes young people's safety and sense of well-being.

| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Good |
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| <p>The registered manager has managed this home since February 2013. She is a qualified social worker and has extensive experience.</p> <p>Staffing arrangements in the home meet the needs of the young people. The clear strength of the cohesive and long-term staff team is that it is effective in maintaining stability for young people. Staff are qualified to work with children in a residential setting. They also receive specific training according to the needs of the young people, such as training on drugs and substance use. Regular staff meetings and handover discussions embed consistent practice across the staff team, thus promoting the home's statement of purpose.</p> <p>Individuals receive good information about the service because the home's statement of purpose is kept up to date. Young people also appreciate the information they receive in the young people's guide. For some, this booklet, was very useful as part of a planned transition to the home.</p> <p>Managers have a clear understanding of the service's strengths and areas for development. For example, the current development of new recording formats for physical intervention go some way to addressing recording shortfalls, as identified in this inspection.</p> <p>Complaints are well managed. Confusion regarding potential shortfalls in safeguarding young people at this home emerge from inconsistencies in recording in the home. Some records were not accurate, signed or the author identified.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff team have used this recent challenging situation as an opportunity for reflection and improvement. The registered manager is now forging a positive relationship with the designated safeguarding officer and is reviewing the quality of recording. The recording format for physical intervention is already redesigned. Actions taken by the manager, staff and social worker promote the safety of young people and a recent complaint about the use of physical intervention is not substantiated.</p> <p>Young people grow in confidence and develop good social skills because they are encouraged to, and regularly do, express their views. They experience a positive rapport with staff who calmly listen, but also remind young people about manners and boundaries.</p> <p>Young people have confidence in the manager and staff because they are good advocates. Staff work hard to ensure that young people have their needs and rights met. For example, networking with benefits agencies for young people with learning difficulties and helping them with preparation for independent living.</p> <p>The manager and staff are willing to challenge placing authorities when placement</p> |      |

planning is not effective. For example, the manager consistently challenges the local education authority in terms of finding appropriate education arrangements. This sense of challenge ensures that some young people have the most appropriate placements as they move back to their own local authority. Liaison with education services has been crucial in maintaining consistent education during transition to this home. This includes insisting on essential transport requirements until young people take up a local placement.

The home improves because the manager and staff are open to scrutiny from independent monitoring, to the views of other professionals and young people, and to formal inspection. Shortfalls as identified in this inspection were already being addressed as the manager accepts and works on feedback from other agencies.

## 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 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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