

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC357133
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Social Care Services (Clayton) Limited
Registered person address	31 Shaw Road, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 4AG

Responsible individual	Stephen Davitt
Registered manager	Raymond Ashton
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	11 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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

SC357133

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people live in a safe, caring and nurturing environment. They are encouraged, helped and protected by a consistent and well-informed staff team.
- There is a well-established staff team. The staff members know each other's strengths and work well together to ensure that boundaries are consistently maintained and that positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded.
- Young people who demonstrate challenging behaviours have learned to self-regulate and to articulate their feelings. They are using alternative coping mechanisms and, in turn, are developing more socially acceptable behaviour.
- Staff encourage and support young people to have age-appropriate experiences. Young people are supported to establish and maintain positive and safe friendships in the community, which are enhanced by the links that staff have made with the families of friends.
- The home is well resourced in terms of staffing. However, there are some shortfalls relating to ongoing maintenance of the environment. The outstanding matters relate to touching up damaged paintwork, undertaking minor repair work around the home and replacing damaged equipment.
- The home is well managed by an experienced and dedicated registered manager. He is child-focused and provides visible leadership for his staff team. Staff are well supported in their delivery of good quality care, and are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills throughout supervision and training.
- Good management oversight ensures that the majority of shortfalls are identified and acted upon. However, there is one repeated requirement at this inspection. This relates to notifying Ofsted when an allegation is made. This is viewed as an administrative oversight and has not compromised the care and safety of the young person.

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 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 must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered provider must notify HMCI without delay when an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there is made. (Regulation 40(4)(c))	23 June 2016
8: The education standard (1) The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure: (a) that staff: (i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face, and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers (vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training to maximise the child's achievement (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible.	23 June 2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4).
- Provide a homely environment. In particular, ensure that the home is well maintained and furnished ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11 February 2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
6 May 2015	Full	Good
5 January 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24 July 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff work tirelessly to provide opportunities for young people to succeed, and are not daunted by initial setbacks. Many of the young people arrive in the home having experienced considerable early childhood trauma. Staff understand this and make every effort to help them to settle and to get back on track. One social worker said 'X has developed really good relationships with staff. This is because staff understand his needs, his background and complexities and are consistent with him. They give a very clear message that they won't let him down and they really haven't.' Young people benefit from good quality care. They benefit from warmth, stability and positive relationships with staff. Young people report that they feel confident in sharing their likes and dislikes and feel that their views are listened to and respected. Consequently, young people appear happy, relaxed and confident. Consultation and communication levels are positive. Staff and young people were observed discussing issues and planning events together throughout the inspection. Time is set aside to allow more formal consultations to take place. For example, opportunities for them to make choices linked to activities, menus and other areas of daily life in the home. Young people are encouraged to attend their reviews and are able to contribute to the decisions being made about them. This was confirmed by a social worker, who said 'Staff have worked hard to encourage X's communication skills. As a result he has made massive progress and is now more able to self-advocate. He is supported to attend reviews and is now more able to communicate his wishes and feelings.' The education arrangements for young people are variable. Some have maintained excellent attendance, are making considerable progress and have clear aspirations for the future, while others have struggled. Staff do help young people to consider their educational needs, but alternative education options are still in the process of being sorted out. This means that some young people are not receiving at least 25 hours of good-quality education per week. Furthermore, clear targets and plans are not in place, which further impedes the home's ability to measure and promote young people's academic progress. In these instances, young people do not fully reach their potential in education and training. Staff advocate, support and facilitate contact for young people in line with their individual care plans. The team has been proactive in moving contact plans on, to allow some young people to have unsupervised contact in their home area. Staff	

are particularly skilful at developing relationships with families, which enables them to work in partnership in the best interests of young people. This reinforces young people's sense of belonging, identity and connectivity with those who are important to them.

Great value is placed on peer relationships, and staff do their utmost to help young people to develop and maintain positive friendships. They welcome young people's friends into the home and have established good links with their parents. This enables young people to have the same experiences as any other young person. For example, going out on activities together, playing out and having meals in each other's homes.

Young people live in a large house that provides them with a lot of space. Generally, the home is welcoming, clean and tidy. However, parts of the home require attention. This includes touching up damaged paintwork, minor repair work and replacing damaged fixtures and fittings.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
This home provides an environment where young people feel safe and are safe. They can easily identify staff who they feel comfortable to speak with should they have any worries or concerns. Young people living in this home have histories of putting themselves, and sometimes others, at risk through their actions or unsafe behaviour. However, through the implementation of good daily routines, clear structure and consistent behaviour management strategies, risk-taking behaviour has significantly reduced. One social worker said, 'Staff are consistent and provide structured boundaries and routines. This has definitely helped Y to settle. I have seen that he is now more able to regulate his emotions and is willing to take responsibility for his actions and accept consequences.' All areas of behaviour management, including physical interventions, are well managed and monitored. Records are up to date and provide a good overview of incidents. Evidence indicates that, while young people are exploring boundaries and expressing feelings, the environment remains highly supportive. Records demonstrate that, over time, the frequency and severity of these incidents reduce. This demonstrates that young people are learning other ways to express their feelings, stresses and anxieties. Improvements have been made to the making of placements. Managers now	

complete an impact risk assessment to reflect upon the individual needs of the young person and whether the service can safely care for them. However, the assessments do not fully consider how the home plans to manage the group dynamic, and fails to demonstrate how the admission may impact on the risky behaviours of others in the home. To date, this has not impacted on the young people currently living in the home. That said, overall this weakens the effectiveness of the home's matching process.

Excellent working relationships are in place with the local police missing from home coordinator, who visits the home regularly. Contact made with professionals during the inspection confirmed that young people going missing is currently not an area of concern for this home. The current group of young people do not place themselves at risk by leaving the home without authorisation. This further demonstrates that young people feel safe, happy and settled.

Staff receive safeguarding training that is regularly updated. They are knowledgeable and confident in implementing the home's child protection policies and take a proactive approach to ensuring the safety and welfare of residents. Placing social workers report high levels of satisfaction at the quality of care provided and are confident in the team's ability to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. Parents are equally satisfied and say 'The team has done a good job with my son. He has come on leaps and bounds. I know that my son is safe and doing well, I couldn't ask for more.'

Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and procedures are in place for staff to follow in the event of allegations, suspicion of abuse or unsafe practice. Professionals confirm that the organisation is transparent, and concerns are reported appropriately. That said, there has been at least one occasion where the registered manager has not informed Ofsted of an allegation. This hinders the regulator from effectively carrying out its safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that young people are protected from harm.

Young people receive a good level of safe care from a staff team which has been subject to robust recruitment processes. Appropriate checks are conducted prior to commencing employment. This ensures that only those suitable to work with vulnerable young people are appointed.

The manager has acted on learning from previous inspections and has reviewed and updated the home's location risk assessment. This means that any new risks are quickly identified and appropriate strategies are implemented to mitigate the risks.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
Young people benefit from being cared for by a team that is effectively managed and well supported. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and is passionate about helping young people to achieve their full potential. He keeps up to date with the day-to-day care practice and regular spends time with young people. He has strong relationships with them and demonstrates commitment to their individual development, safety and care. The home is well resourced in terms of staffing. Staff have a broad range of experiences and skills to meet the everyday challenges of caring for young people. Leaders, managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and they are all given regular opportunities to develop and reflect on practice. Team meetings and handovers provide good opportunities for discussion about young people's progress and identify areas for development. These mechanisms have undoubtedly contributed to the improved communication and consistency within the team. New staff are well inducted and given good support from the registered manager and experienced staff. They are provided with good opportunities to develop their understanding and knowledge and apply this learning in their day-to-day care of young people. All staff receive regular practice-related training and supervision. Staff spoken with during the inspection confirm that supervision helps to develop their knowledge, skills and practice. Training and development activities are good. All mandatory training is up to date. This includes core training, such as safeguarding and first aid, alongside more specialist courses, such as child sexual exploitation training, drug awareness and attachment. Training is ongoing and regular opportunities are in place to refresh old skills and to develop new ones. This ensures that care practice remains current and well informed. Regular monitoring of the home, both externally and internally, is good. Monthly visits by an external visitor are undertaken to ensure that there is independent scrutiny of the quality of care provided. The visitor consults with young people, staff and partner agencies to obtain their views. Any shortfalls identified as part of this process are routinely addressed to ensure that the home is operating appropriately and is meeting young people's needs. The statement of purpose defines the life and work of the home. This means that stakeholders are clear about how the home works and what to expect from the service. Similarly, the young people's guide helps young people to know how they will be supported, what their rights are and what the expectations of them are. Both documents are reviewed regularly and the manager ensures that relevant	

parties are notified of any changes.

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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