

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC357455
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Woodside House Care Ltd
Registered provider address	Woodside House, 94 Tockholes Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 1LL

Responsible individual	Alison Hayton-Gregg
Registered manager	Michael Gregg
Inspector	Jackie Line

Inspection date	31/3/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC357455

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people thrive and make significant progress because of the warm and nurturing care that they receive from the family partnership that runs the home and a small, dedicated staff team.
- Without exception, young people are happy, safe and settled and enjoy excellent relationships with staff, based on mutual respect and trust.
- Young people enjoy an excellent range of leisure opportunities that broaden their horizons and experiences and allow them to have fun.
- Leaders and managers display passion and commitment to their roles. This, in turn, sets a culture in the home that is aspirational, resilient, caring and safe.
- Managers and staff identify and understand risk, and a robust response to safeguarding concerns protects young people and others from harm.
- Staff work exceptionally well to engage birth families and they work inclusively with them. This has a positive impact on the lives of young people.
- Highly collaborative working with partner agencies supports young people's progress and development. Professionals and families consistently express high levels of satisfaction in the service.
- Effectively managed introductions to the home enable new young people to settle well and others to adjust to the change in dynamics.
- Young people participate in community groups and, in doing so, contribute to improving the lives of others. As a result, young people develop excellent social skills, build confidence and develop their own feelings of self-worth.
- Highly individualised care means that diversity is respected and promoted, and young people's personalities flourish.

To continue to improve the home needs to:

- Ensure that all staff practise fire drills so that they know what to do in the event of a fire in the home.
- Ensure that all staff receive supervision at regular intervals, which allows them to reflect on their practice and performance.
- Ensure that internal and external monitoring systems are suitably robust to support continued improvement in the home's development and in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. Specifically, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, ensure that all persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that the registered person has systems in place so that all staff receive supervision, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. Specifically, ensure that supervision takes place at regular intervals. ('The guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided, the experiences of children living there and the impact that the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. The review should include the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive. ('The guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- Ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the home's care. ('The guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is a private children's home, owned and managed by a family partnership.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/05/2015	Full	Good
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/11/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Managers and staff work tremendously hard to develop positive relationships with young people, based on mutual respect and trust. Young people recognise that staff care for them, and one young person told the inspector that the best thing about living in this home is that 'it is loving'. Another young person said: '[Staff] are always there when you need them for anything, at any time, and they will do the best they can to support you.' Young people receive exceptional care, which is tailored to their individual needs. Managers and staff respond sensitively to difference and diversity and, as a result, young people start to become more confident in their own identities. Young people enjoy a range of activities and opportunities that enrich their experiences. Examples include theatre trips, music concerts, local festivals, sporting events and holidays abroad. Young people also benefit from different activities that reflect their personal interests and talents, such as playing football, going to the cinema, cooking and attending a drama group. Such activities enable young people to have fun, develop their social skills and broaden their horizons. One young person said: 'I am having the time of my life.' Another young person commented: 'We have a laugh a lot of the time. I enjoy living here and I am happy.' Some young people participate in community groups and make a positive contribution that benefits themselves and others. For example, two young people are members of a Children in Care Council. As part of their involvement, they have narrated an animation video designed to help others know what it is like to be in care. One young person is participating in a literary project, sharing the stories of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. He has also contributed to a project designed to help others understand how to engage young people in decision-making. Being involved in helping others improves young people's feelings of self-worth and gives them a sense of achievement. Young people receive recognition for their efforts, winning a PROUD award for their 'outstanding service to the community'. Another young person received praise because he 'shared his views and ideas to help influence and inform the work of the children's commissioner'. Staff clearly support young people's achievements, and a young person said: '[Staff] are always wanting to make us feel proud for what we have earned and achieved.' This support and recognition undoubtedly build young people's confidence and make them feel valued. This service clearly demonstrates sustained improvement to the lives of young people. All young people make significant progress from their starting points in different aspects of their development. For example, one young person who arrived	

at the home anxious and shy is now happy, comfortable and growing in confidence. Another young person is far less aggressive and destructive, and his mum says that he is 'unrecognisable' from what he was. This young person's independent reviewing officer described his progress as a 'triumph'. One young person recognises that his relationships with other people have improved since he has lived here.

Introductions to the home are well managed. Young people have the opportunity to visit before moving in and are provided with a welcome guide that explains what they can expect. This provides young people with the opportunity to ask questions, see their new home and meet with staff and young people. Young people's families are also involved in the transition process, making them feel at ease and confident about what is happening. Staff prepare young people already living in the home well for any new arrival and involve them in the process. This allays any anxieties that they may have. As a result, transitions go smoothly and this helps new young people to settle in quickly and begin to make progress. A parent described staff as being 'amazing with the transition' and said, 'I am really impressed and [X] says he likes it. He is 1000% better already. He is in a good routine, settled, happy and looks better in himself.'

Managers and staff develop excellent relationships with young people's families and so promote positive and safe contact. The inspector observed staff going to great lengths to ensure that a birth parent was able to attend her child's review meeting. The member of staff said: 'It is important to us that [mum] is happy with where her son lives.' This demonstrates their commitment to working positively and inclusively with birth families. As a result, young people enjoy improved relationships and quality time with their parents and siblings. Furthermore, birth parents have high levels of confidence in the care that their children receive.

Staff actively promote young people's good health. Young people attend routine and specialist appointments to promote their well-being. Staff respond promptly to issues that arise. They have made an appropriate referral to instigate a review of a young person's health condition to help determine what, if any, medication he needs. Because of the support that they receive, young people's health improves. For example, the dentist has commented on young people's improved dental hygiene, and one young person has now been discharged from a specialist service because of the progress that he has made.

All young people achieve excellent school attendance, and this has a positive impact on their learning. Staff fully promote the importance of education and support young people well. This includes helping young people to learn how to manage their behaviour in school, supporting their achievements and liaising closely with teachers when issues arise. One young person said: 'They teach me different ways of coping at school, like teaching me to walk away when someone tries to wind me up. They support me with homework, go to meetings and parents evenings and support me with events at school, such as [a talent contest].' Another young person said: 'When I got star of the week at school, my carers said they

were very impressed with me.' Good support motivates young people to do well.

Managers and staff place great emphasis on supporting young people to express their views and wishes. One young person said: 'My views are always considered, and I feel I can speak freely.' Young people's views matter, and their feelings and well-being are at the forefront of everything that staff do. This makes young people feel valued. Regular consultation individually and in groups means that young people have their say in the day-to-day running of the home. Young people fully participate in their review meetings and so contribute to care planning decisions that affect them.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe and are safe living in this home. They can identify a trusted adult whom they can talk to should they have any worries. As a result, young people feel secure and cared about. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe and know how to escalate concerns should they need to. Managers and staff follow procedures and respond to all safeguarding matters robustly. This protects young people from harm. An independent reviewing officer said: '[Staff] continue to be a real asset in ensuring X's safety.' Young people do not go missing from home and do not have periods when they are absent without permission. This indicates that young people are currently happy and settled. Managers attend meetings with the missing-from-home coordinator to keep abreast of relevant information. This means that they are well prepared and able to respond in the event that a young person does go missing. Managers and staff understand risk and they take action to ensure that risky behaviours are minimised and understood. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of young people's needs and triggers, and robust risk assessments underpin good practice. There are clear strategies in place to enable staff to respond effectively to risky situations and behaviour. This promotes young people's safety and welfare. Effective partnership working with relevant agencies helps to keep young people and others safe from harm. For example, sharing sensitive information appropriately enables others to make informed decisions about their own safeguarding arrangements when supporting young people on activities. Furthermore, specialist intervention with one young person is helping to assess risks relating to child sexual exploitation. This work is informing risk assessments and supports staff in keeping the young person safe. A worker from the Engage	

team reported: 'It has to be said that [staff] are doing a fantastic job in keeping [X] and others safe.'

New parental control software helps staff to monitor young people's use of the internet, to ensure that this is safe. This complements good supervision by staff, safer internet agreements and individual work with young people to help them to understand the dangers of the internet and social media. This work is ongoing, and such measures educate and safeguard young people. Staff remain alert to the risks and, as a result, this enabled them to manage a potentially high-risk situation effectively.

The approach to behaviour management is well considered and balanced. Staff promote appropriate behaviour through positive relationships, and this reduces the need for consequences. Consistent boundaries and clear messages about behaviour enable young people to learn what is expected of them. Young people report that when they do receive consequences these are fair. No physical interventions have taken place since May 2015, indicating that staff are skilled in de-escalation. This promotes young people's safety and well-being.

Young people live in a comfortable home that is maintained to a high standard. Routine health and safety checks provide a safe physical environment. Fire procedures are in place, and young people participate in regular fire drills. As a result, they know how to exit the property safely in the event of a fire in the home. Two staff members have yet to practise a fire evacuation drill, and a recommendation is raised to address this.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home benefits from strong and effective leadership by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. He has been in post since the home opened in 2008. The registered manager and responsible individual remain very child focused, and this means that young people's needs and interests are at the heart of all they do. Managers are passionate about and dedicated to providing high standards of care and promoting excellent outcomes for young people. As a result, there is a clear ethos in the home that is aspirational, nurturing, supportive and safe. A social worker said: 'The whole ethos of this children's home is the provision of safe care, understanding the total needs of each child and providing a care experience that recognises the child's physical and emotional needs. These needs are provided for in a warm, family atmosphere with consistent care, clear boundaries and by listening and acting on the wishes and feelings of the children.'	

Young people receive exceptionally good care from a supportive and enthusiastic staff team. Sufficient staff are employed to meet the needs of young people. Low staff turnover provides young people with stability and consistency from people who understand them well. Positive relationships enable young people to make progress and to enjoy positive experiences.

Managers review and update young people's plans regularly and so they keep abreast of young people's progress and development. When necessary, they advocate for young people, ensuring that they have the right support to help them to reach their potential.

Managers and staff work proactively with professionals and families who all report high levels of satisfaction in the service and the standards of care afforded to young people. A parent said: 'I think it is an absolutely fantastic service, second to none. Staff provide structures and boundaries in a really caring way and are consistent. [My son] is provided with the very best care.' A team manager reported that the home is 'a pleasure to deal with', and a teacher said: 'I cannot praise them enough for all their hard work with the young people in their care.' Effective working relationships promote young people's welfare.

Staff say that they feel supported and are proud of the service. Comments received from staff include: 'I feel valued and delighted to work closely with people who want to achieve positive outcomes in an excellent quality environment. I am proud to be part of this team.'

Some gaps in the frequency of supervision mean that staff are not provided with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and performance at timely intervals. Records reflect that staff attend training courses, and managers have identified new courses specifically targeted to meet the needs of young people. This demonstrates that managers are committed to promoting their own professional development and that of the staff team.

External monitoring processes are not sufficiently robust. For example, monthly visits by the independent person are rarely unannounced, and no recommendations have been made for six months. This does not support the home's continued development, nor does it reflect rigorous oversight.

The registered manager has systems in place with which to monitor and review the quality of service provided, and he demonstrates an understanding of the strengths and needs of the service. This knowledge informs the development plan to secure continued improvement. However, the quality of care review report provides generic information that does not always relate to the relevant reporting period. Furthermore, it does not include the views of young people about their experiences of living in the home and the care that they receive. A recommendation is raised to improve this area of practice.

Four recommendations are raised following this inspection.

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 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 that 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 whom 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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