

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC361789
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Julie Walsh
Inspector	David Kidner

Inspection date	13/10/2016
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

SC361789

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people received good-quality care and support from a staff team that places their needs at the centre of their care. The staff team is very knowledgeable, aware, and skilled at meeting the needs of the individual young people.
- A strength of the service is supporting young people to develop their communication skills. As a result of this, young people have made good progress in developing their skills, and their confidence and independence has grown. Parents and staff are easily able to recognise positive outcomes in this area for young people.
- Young people enjoy a variety of social, educational and leisure activities. This includes visits to local community-based facilities and in the wider field. Activities are planned around the specific needs of the young people.
- Another strength of this service is the registered manager's ability to promote and develop partnership working with a wide range of professionals, including teachers, social workers and health professionals. In addition, the registered manager promotes good partnership working with young people's parents and families.
- Staff are skilled in supporting young people to manage their behaviours. Comprehensive behaviour support plans guide staff in how to meet young people's needs. When required, the advice and support of healthcare professionals are sought and acted upon.
- The registered manager has a good understanding of the service and of where improvements can be made.
- Areas for improvement identified at this inspection are in relation to the admission process and record keeping.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The care planning standard The registered person must: 14 (2)(a) ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. In particular, through the home's admissions procedures and protocols, leaders and managers must clearly demonstrate that they can meet the needs of children before they are admitted to the home.	11/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's records on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to nine children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties.

The home is owned by a local authority. It is located in close proximity to a school for children and young people with additional needs and a children's home that offers short breaks. Some facilities and resources are shared between these three services.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive good care and support from a dedicated staff team which places their needs at the centre of their care. The staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the young people. They are enthusiastic and have developed good relationships with the young people. One parent said, 'The staff work hard to understand your child and to get to know them.' Another parent said, 'I can see the difference in him now – he seems more relaxed and he's happy.' A social worker said, 'I do not have any concerns about the quality of care that is provided.' There are good outcomes for most young people. However, on one occasion a young person had an unplanned ending to their placement, because staff could not meet his needs. Leaders and managers ensured that a sensitive and smooth transition took place to an alternative placement. All the young people living at the home have very individual and complex support needs, and they use various methods of communication. Staff receive specific training in augmentative communication. They are skilled in supporting young people to use electronic devices to enable them to express their views, wishes and needs. As a result of this, young people's confidence and independence is promoted. One parent said, 'My son is making progress with his communication, life skills and his confidence.' A social worker for one young person said, 'I cannot believe the progress he has made in his communication.' Placement plans contain outcomes from speech and language therapist reports and identify the progress young people are making, as well as plans to further support their communication needs. Young people access a wide range of community-based social and leisure facilities based on the young person's individual needs, likes and dislikes. This may mean they go for a walk across moors and fields, or visits to leisure centres and cafés. Young people have regular contact with their families, and parents are welcomed to the home at any time. The staff team has supported some young people to have a holiday with their families. Young people make good progress with their education. There is good communication between school staff and education staff. This ensures that the educational and social care needs of the young people are shared and discussed and, where needed, adjustments are made to ensure their holistic needs are met. Staff provide young people with a welcoming and homely environment, and young	

people are relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings. The home is designed to ensure that young people's individual needs are catered for. In particular, some bedrooms are more personalised than others. This is clearly recorded in individual placement plans. There is ample communal space for young people to spend time alone, or with others.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The registered manager and staff team place the safety and well-being of young people as a priority. All staff have received safeguarding training and demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and protocols. The designated officer of the local authority does not raise any issues, or concerns. There have not been any referrals made to the designated officer or children's services since the last inspection. Parents and social workers consider that young people are safe. A parent said, 'They do their utmost to keep my son safe.' Comprehensive behaviour support plans identify young people's known risks and provide guidance for staff on how to respond to these in order to keep young people safe, and to promote continuity and consistency of care. The behaviour support plans are supported by detailed risk assessments that are reviewed on a regular basis. Staff are skilled at identifying triggers that may cause some young people to become upset. Leaders and managers respond professionally and responsibly when it is identified that the behaviours of young people begin to have a negative effect on the individual, and others. They seek external professional advice and support, including the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and healthcare professionals. The staff team is competent at gathering data in relation to young people's behaviours when this is requested by external professionals. In particular, matters relating to self-injurious behaviour. The data gathered is used to inform the behaviour support plan, placement plan and risk assessments. Restraint is rarely used and sanctions are not imposed. There has been one incident requiring the use of restraint since the last inspection. The responsible individual has reviewed the appropriateness of the incident and measure used, and has countersigned the document to evidence the appropriateness of the restraint. Staff receive regular training and refresher training in the home's chosen method of de-escalation and restraint. There have not been any incidents of young people going missing from the home, and there are no concerns in respect of child sexual exploitation or radicalisation.	

Leaders and managers ensure that the selection and recruitment of staff is robust in order to safeguard young people.

The environment is safe, and fire safety is promoted. The registered manager ensures that regular checks and servicing of the home's utilities services are regularly undertaken.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The registered manager has been in post since August 2007 and has the appropriate experience and qualifications. She is undertaking the Level 5 diploma in leadership and management and expects to complete this qualification by the end of December 2016. The registered manager is supported by an experienced and competent deputy manager. The registered manager continues to undertake robust scrutiny of the quality of care that is provided. She clearly identifies the improvements required, and this informs the home's service development plan. In addition, there continue to be regular visits by the independent visitor. The registered manager ensures that any recommendations that are made are acted upon in a timely manner. Leaders and managers complete a compatibility risk assessment prior to admitting a young person. However, a recent compatibility risk assessment identified that the service would not be able to meet the needs of a proposed young person. The registered manager, the responsible person and senior managers in the local authority met to agree the action that would be required in order to meet the young person's needs. They also took into consideration the needs of the young people already living in the home. However, the compatibility risk assessment was not updated to reflect the action taken. The registered manager said that this was an oversight and that the compatibility risk assessment, if updated, would have reflected the decision that they would be able to meet the young person's needs. The registered manager and senior managers learn from placement breakdowns and serious events. Following a recent placement breakdown, the registered manager, the responsible individual, and senior managers in the local authority met and developed an action plan based on 'lessons learned' from the placement breakdown. Placement plans are comprehensive and clearly identify the needs of the young	

people and how these needs are to be met. The plans are regularly reviewed to ensure continuity and consistency of care.

There are effective arrangements in place to ensure that young people have a smooth transition both into, and when they leave, the home. One parent said, 'My son's transitions was incredibly well organised and set up; they put parents at ease.' In addition, the staff team has received positive feedback from the local authority. One social worker sent an email to the registered manager and staff team thanking them 'for their hard work in bringing the transitions plan together.'

The registered manager engages extremely well with the wider community. She is in regular discussions with social workers and team managers of the local authority, with parents, and with a number of external professionals, including senior members of staff at the local schools, a learning disabilities nurse, consultant paediatrics, local general practitioners, and members of the local CAMHS team. This promotes close partnership working.

Staff speak highly of the guidance and support they have received from the registered manager, deputy manager and the responsible individual. One member of staff said, 'The registered manager is brilliant; she's approachable and finds time for you.' Another member of staff said, 'She works with us and listens to us.'

The registered manager ensures that staff receive mandatory training and specialised training to meet the needs of the young people. Specialised training includes training in the use of emergency medication, epilepsy self-harm and attachment. The vast majority of staff are qualified at Level 3. The remainder of staff are undertaking this qualification. The registered manager said that those who are not enrolled will be so, at the earliest opportunity.

Leaders and managers continue to use research-based evidence to improve the quality of care provided. The deputy manager has recently used research in the use of play with young people with complex support needs. The staff team have met to discuss how this research can be implemented to improve play and engagement with young people.

The registered manager ensures that all appropriate agencies, authorities and Ofsted are notified of significant events.

Some documents and records do not have dates and signatures of the author. The registered manager acknowledges that an improvement in this area is required.

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 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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