

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC361789
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Cornwall Council
Registered person address	County Hall, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3AY
Responsible individual	Victoria Allan
Registered manager	Julie Walsh
Inspector	David Kidner

Inspection date	16/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The registered manager has completed a comprehensive admissions process to determine that they can meet the needs of a young person before they are admitted to the home. In addition, she ensures that there is an effective transitions plan that is sensitive to the needs of the young person and of the young people accommodated in the home. The placement plan for one young person, recently admitted to the home, provides staff with comprehensive information about how to meet their needs. This plan is supported with a detailed risk assessment that identifies the known risks, how the risks are reduced and how the risks are to be managed. These plans are regularly reviewed. However, the most recent placement plan for one young person has not been countersigned by his placing authority, although the placing authority has signed his most recent risk assessment. Signing the placement plan will confirm that his placing authority is satisfied with the placement plan that has been devised by the staff. Young people continue to receive good care and support. A social worker agreed and said, 'I do not have any concerns about the quality of care provided. I am full of praise of the staff.' The social worker added, 'The staff are good at communicating with me, they discuss any issues with the appropriate professionals and we are all working together.' There are positive relationships between young people and the staff. Staff have a good awareness and understanding of the young people's needs. They engage with young people extremely well. Young people appear very relaxed and happy at the home. They enjoy play opportunities with staff, access a variety of activities and are able to develop their independence skills. At the time of this inspection, one young person was observed laughing and smiling at the games that they were playing with staff and other young people went out for lunch, ice skating and for walks. Another young person prepared a light snack and refreshments. One young person said, 'I am happy, I like it here and the staff are good.' The experiences provided to young people help them to develop.	

The use of restraint is rare. However, if used, the records pertaining to this are comprehensive and are audited by the registered manager and the responsible individual. Sanctions are not imposed. Since the last inspection, there are no recorded episodes of young people going missing, no concerns in respect of child sexual exploitation and no referrals to the designated officer or children's services. There have not been any complaints.

The registered manager has recently devised a system to enhance the monitoring and inform the evaluation of each young person's behaviours and accidents/injuries to young people and staff. This data is used to inform staff's practice and for discussion at reviews and other appropriate meetings. This system is in the early stages of development and will be reviewed.

Staff speak very well of the support that they receive from leaders and managers. They said that their views and ideas are listened to. They said that they have adequate numbers of staff on duty to meet the individual needs of the young people. However, they consider that the use of waking night staff needs to be regularly reviewed due to the unpredictable behaviours of some young people. They said that they have raised this with the leader and managers, and this has been acknowledged. The deputy manager confirmed this.

The home continues to be very well managed. The registered manager ensures that there is regular external scrutiny of the home and she responds promptly to any recommendations that are made. In addition, she has undertaken a comprehensive review of the quality of care provided, and has a good understanding of the strengths of the home and where improvements can be made. The areas identified to further improve are recorded in the home's development plan. Timescales to make the improvements are clearly set.

The requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection have been met.

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
13/10/2016	Full	Good
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 staffing levels meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. In particular, regularly review the number of staff on duty at night. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- Ensure effective care planning and strong working relationships between the staff of the home and the placing authority. In particular, that the placing authority confirms their agreement with placement plans that have been devised by staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.2)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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