

SC366002

Registered provider: Alliance Care and Education Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There is a registered school on site.

Inspection date: 7 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2017

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 last full inspection.

At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager and staff have continued to provide young people with a good standard of care and support. They make sure that young people live in a friendly, positive and homely place. The registered manager and staff are ambitious for young people and they make a positive difference to young people's lives. Based on their starting points, young people are making pleasing progress across their developmental needs. Their outcomes have improved, often despite the complexity of their needs and the challenges that they face. For example, young people are happier, healthier, developing confidence, social skills and independence. Young people's participation in education has improved significantly and they are working hard and achieving positive results. They have lots of opportunities to broaden their experiences. Young people take part in fun activities, including playing computer games together, going to the gym and the cinema, and they are developing their skills and talents, such

as in art and music. For example, a young person enjoys playing the piano and has started to have lessons.

The registered manager and staff use individualised care planning effectively to meet young people's personal needs. The registered manager closely monitors the arrangements for young people's care, and ensures that the home's own plans clearly reflect the local authority plan for each young person. The registered manager and the key members of staff working with each young person meet at least once a month and review the young person's progress and support plan. This is working really well to understand the young person's experiences and progress. The meeting provides a good opportunity to reflect on, and decide whether, plans are still meeting the young person's needs, and to make changes to ensure that the young person is still getting the best possible support. For example, the registered manager and staff identified new ways of working with a young person to improve her personal care. Young people take part in the care planning process and are encouraged to voice their wishes and feelings.

The registered manager has improved the way that he makes decisions about young people coming to live at the home. He gathers and analyses all the available information about the young person's needs and circumstances. This includes talking to social workers in depth about the plan, the young person's current carers, and seeking information from the police about any possible risks to the young person. The registered manager also meets the young person where they are living and makes sure the young person has the chance to visit the home and meet members of staff. This helps the young person to be involved in the decision about where they live. As a result, the registered manager's thorough assessment has helped him to work out whether he can respond effectively to the young person's assessed needs and to consider carefully the compatibility of the young people living at the home.

Young people are prepared and supported to move out in line with their plans. Over the summer, members of staff successfully supported a young person to move into her own accommodation. The young person was fully involved in the planning of the move. Staff took her to see different types of accommodation so that she was able to pick the one that she liked the best, so that she could live near to her family and college. Staff provide young people with plenty of opportunities to develop the skills that they need for adult life. For example, staff are supporting a young person to feel confident about shopping, cooking, and managing their money. The young person said, 'I'm getting the best support, staff are helping me with my pathway plan. They helped me to cook scouse, do my ironing and I'm keeping my room tidy. I want to get this done so I'll be ready to move on.'

Some young people continue to become involved in harmful behaviour, including drugs and substance misuse, crime, self-harming, going missing and putting themselves at risk of sexual exploitation. The registered manager and staff have a clear understanding of these risks and take suitable action to try to protect these young people. The registered manager and staff have taken effective action when they have had concerns about young people's safety. The registered manager has challenged and addressed poor safe caring practice to improve young people's safety. He works in partnership with social workers, the police, the local authority, and youth offending and support services to develop a clear strategy for managing the risks to the young people. The registered

manager and staff applied a safeguarding plan to reduce the risks of a young person going missing from home, misusing drugs and being exploited. They carefully and sensitively provided continuous supervision and control of a young person in line with a court order that prevented her from being free to leave the home. While the court order was in place, the young person did not go missing from home, engaged positively with staff and took part in education. Key members of staff worked extremely well with the young person so that she understood the dangers of exploitative relationships and how to keep herself safe.

The registered manager identified when a young person was at risk of continued serious risk of harm and made sure that the placing authority found alternative accommodation that was more able to meet her needs. The working relationship between the registered manager and the police has been a challenge at times. Nevertheless, they are working hard to improve how they work together. The police missing from home coordinator commented, 'I have noticed an improvement. The manager keeps me informed when other issues arise in the placement.'

Since the last inspection, the quality of young people's risk assessments, placement plans and behaviour management records have improved. The registered manager and staff now make sure that these records are always up to date and clearly set out the arrangements for each young person's care. They are now living documents that help staff to understand young people's needs. The records set out the specific steps needed to support young people, including the best ways to help each young person manage their feelings and control their behaviour safely.

The registered manager has a detailed understanding of young people's progress and priorities for their care. He has reflected critically on recent safeguarding incidents and has taken appropriate action to improve the quality of care, including strengthening the assessment of the home's ability to meet young people's needs. However, the internal and external independent scrutiny of the home do not provide an in-depth assessment of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare. Neither does this scrutiny show the impact that the quality of care is having on the experiences of young people or their outcomes. The monitoring focuses on describing what has happened and that records are being kept, but it does not evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the support that young people are receiving. For example, these reports note the number of times that young people have been missing from home and that the occurrences are appropriately managed and recorded, but they do not evaluate the work being done to manage and reduce the risks and to understand the reasons for children going missing. Similarly, the registered manager's review of the quality of care does not reflect critically on the standard of support that young people receive and the difference it is making to their lives. In addition, the review of the quality of care does not show young people's views about the support that they receive and how they feel about living at the home. This insight into how young people experience the care that they receive is crucial in helping the leaders and managers to understand the quality and impact of what they are doing. Consequently, the lack of thorough and evaluative monitoring is limiting their understanding of the quality of the care and their ability to identify and make further improvements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(f)(h)) This includes ensuring that the independent person's monitoring and the internal review of the quality of care provide a detailed evaluation of the quality of care and childcare practice, the experiences of children living there, and the impact that this is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Also, make sure children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care and that these views are recorded in the monitoring reports in order to understand their experiences and to inform and support the continued improvement in the quality of care provided. The reports should also show how managers are listening and responding to children's views, wishes and	31/03/2018

feelings about the quality of their care.	
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Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC366002

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Alliance Care and Education Limited

Registered provider address: Brow Top Farm, Quernmore, Lancaster LA2 0QW

Responsible individual: Andrew Taylor

Registered manager: Robert Allen

Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector

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