

Children's home – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC366002
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Marina Tully

Inspection date	28/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The home has made noticeable improvements since the last inspection. Staff have worked exceptionally hard at nurturing warm, trusting relationships with young people. This was reflected in a young person's comment when they said, 'Things have improved since you last came to the home. Communication with staff has got better. I trust most staff and get on with them.' Young people benefit from improved relationships with their staff and this is helping them to feel more settled and valued. Staff members' key work sessions with young people are more effective. Staff now spend time planning these sessions and tailoring them to each young person's individual strengths, interests and needs. Furthermore, as young people spend additional quality time with their staff, they become more willing to accept staff's guidance and support. Trusting relationships between members of staff and young people are making the home a more peaceful and safer environment. However, damaged sofas, bed bases, flooring and furniture are preventing young people from living comfortably in their home. Furthermore, poor maintenance of the home is undermining the welcoming and nurturing atmosphere that staff have worked diligently to achieve. The home now ensures that each young person has a personalised education plan in place. Staff support young people to establish improved routines, which enable them to engage fully in their education and continue to learn and achieve. Staff put incentives in place to encourage young people to get up early in the morning so that they arrive at school on time. As a result, young people progress in their education from their starting points. Young people now benefit from having detailed health plans in place. These bespoke health plans reflect the young person's specific health needs and include clear strategies for promoting good health. Health plans document clearly all medical appointments and this supports the monitoring of young people's physical and emotional well-being. Staff work collaboratively with other professionals, such as child and adolescent mental health services and the children looked after nurse. Consequently, the promotion of young people's physical and emotional health is	

effective. A nurse who works closely with the home said, 'I have seen improvements with [young person's name] over the years that he has lived at this home. Partnership working is good. Staff are very engaging and always seek my advice. All young people's health needs are addressed.'

Safeguarding practice has improved. Risk assessments now provide staff with clear and effective guidance on how to keep each young person safe. When young people go missing, staff consistently follow missing from care procedures and liaise with other safeguarding professionals, including the police and social workers. As a result, young people are quickly located and returned home safely. Staff support young people on a daily basis to keep their bedrooms clean, tidy and free from any potential hazards. All professionals spoke positively about the home's safeguarding practice. A social worker said, 'Staff are doing their very best to keep him safe. They are open and honest when incidents arise and they have procedures in place to deal with risk.'

Staff manage young people's behaviour well. Staff members' use of rewards and incentives is helping young people make positive choices and manage difficult emotions more safely. Incentives include rewards for getting to school on time, respecting others and helping staff to keep the home clean and tidy. When necessary, staff use restraint measures to prevent young people from hurting themselves or others. The restraint records sampled demonstrated that staff record clearly the details of each incident and consistently seek the young person's views. This open and transparent practice enables effective scrutiny and, thus, enhances young people's safety in the home. However, the manager's review of restraints can improve further to ensure that staff's debrief is recorded and reflects more clearly the effectiveness of staff members' practice and any concerns or learning points.

The registered manager undertakes regular audits of the quality of care provided in the home. His system for doing this has significantly improved and he has now provided Ofsted with his six-monthly monitoring report as required. The records sampled at this inspection confirmed improvements in staff members' recordings. For example, staff consider the language that they use in their recordings, which is preventing young people from being stigmatised.

The registered manager acknowledges the importance of sustaining all improvements and he demonstrates commitment and capacity to develop the service further. He identifies his stable and dedicated team as a key strength of the home. His service development plans include providing staff with more advanced training on safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
30/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirement

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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must: (2)(b)(vii) provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. In particular, maintain the home to a high standard by repairing and/or replacing all damaged furniture and flooring.	28/04/2017

Recommendation

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

- Ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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 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.

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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