

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC373941
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Martin Frank Sutcliffe
Date of last inspection	23/01/2014

Inspection date	29/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people are positive about living in the home. Relationships between young people and staff are warm and appropriate. Young people's individual needs are outlined within care planning documents and these are regularly reviewed. Young people take part in a good range of activities and as a result try new experiences and have opportunity to make new friends. Positive feedback has been received from external professionals about working together with the home to improve outcomes for young people placed.

Shortfalls identified during this inspection include internal monitoring reports not including a written evaluation of feedback gathered by the senior management team. This means the reports do not demonstrate the learning and actions taken as a result of this feedback. Some significant events relating to the welfare of young people have not been shared with Ofsted, although appropriate action has been taken. Sanctions records do not consistently record the effectiveness of measures set, nor young people's views. This hinders the Registered Manager's ability to assess and evaluate how successful sanctions are and if they are fair. The statement of purpose does not currently have an age range within it, which is a regulatory requirement. The senior management team do not undertake a written compatibility risk assessment when young people move in. As a consequence, it is difficult to

evaluate how safe placement decisions are made, although no negative impact was identified on this inspection.

There is a part-time Registered Manager in post. The other part-time hours are yet to be registered with Ofsted, although a member of staff has been appointed to the role. As a result, the home has not had a Registered Manager in full time day-to-day control of the home since January 2014. This impacts on the stability of leadership in the home. There is an improvement plan in place. This focuses on targets to further positively develop young people's outcomes.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2014	Interim	good progress
28/10/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
23/08/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1))	10/11/2014
5 (2001)	review the statement of purpose and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and the children's guide; notify HMCI of any such revision within 28 days; and if the children's guide is revised, supply a copy to each child accommodated in the home (Regulation 5 (a - c))	10/11/2014
17B	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any	10/11/2014

(2001)	measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include - (f) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3) (f))	
30 (2001)	ensure if, in relation to a children's home, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	10/11/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the system in place to monitor the quality of care within the home shall provide for consultation with children accommodated within the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	10/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children's home staff offer warm and consistent care when a child returns [from a missing episode], and running away should not be viewed as a behaviour that needs to be punished (Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, page 23, para 70)
- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure the home's approach to care minimises the need for police involvement in the home to deal with challenging behaviour and avoids criminalising children unnecessarily. Ensure the home follows procedures and guidance on police involvement in the home, which have been agreed with local police (NMS 3.22)
- ensure the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet, in particular ensuring there is a written risk assessment of compatibility which relates to current children and the needs of potential new children. (NMS 11.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people show good progress in learning independence skills. Some young people demonstrate a better understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene and have improved their self-care skills. This benefits their physical health and their self-esteem. Some young people have successfully moved from the home to supported accommodation. Other young people engage well with daily living tasks such as preparing food, clearing the dinner table and laundry. Some young people have improved their road safety awareness. This means young people successfully acquire practical life skills to help them prepare for adult life.

Young people maintain contact with family members and those who are important to them. Some young people have successfully achieved increased home visits in line with their overall care plan. Young people sustain friendships with peers through attendance at parties and local events together. This ensures that young people's attachments are appropriately maintained with significant people in their life.

Young people's health needs are identified and fully met. Young people attend routine health appointments as required. Some young people receive intense support from child and adolescent mental health professionals. This positively benefits their emotional well-being. Some young people engage with substance misuse workers to learn about the dangers of drug use, however their use of illegal substances continues. Other young people make good use of local support services and learn about keeping themselves safe in the community. As a result, their risk taking behaviour has reduced but not fully ceased.

Young people in the home have mixed overall educational outcomes. Some young people have full school attendance and make good educational progress. Other young people have been excluded from their school and receive home tutoring via education professionals. Other young people have successfully finished their exams and are actively looking for a college place.

Young people engage in a good range of activities. Some young people took part in a short holiday at a residential outdoor adventure centre. Through this break, young people experienced a wide variety of activities such as archery, crate building and abseiling. Young people also met and took part in the activities with other young people also staying at the centre, which supports new friendships. One young person commented 'I enjoyed the trip and I loved the zip wire'. Young people take part in a considerable range of activities. The home offers young people a choice of musical instruments to use and learn with staff. One young person commented 'I like the music room, I have been playing the drums'. This promotes new interests and develops individual talents. Young people play football and outdoor games in the home's garden. They also take part in a variety of indoor activities such as decorating

mugs and egg cups which are then used within the home. Young people are currently fundraising for a children's charity through making and selling craft items. These experiences offer all the young people a good choice of purposeful activities which they engage in.

Quality of care

good

The home's motto is 'learn, laugh, and grow' and staff demonstrate a good awareness of the meaning of this for their work in the home. Positive relationships exist between the young people and staff. One child commented '[the] best thing about the home is that the staff respect my privacy'. Staff facilitate regular key working sessions. These provide individual young people with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on important issues in their lives. Some young people have been sensitively supported by staff when they have been exploring their own identity and appearance. Learning about other cultures is enthusiastically promoted by staff. Themed nights involve contacting an individual country's embassy for resources and information, which has been successful. Recent events include an Icelandic celebration which included snowman races. This creative approach means that young people positively engage with learning about the wider world and other cultures in a fun and child-friendly way.

Young people's views about living in the home are sought through a variety of ways. The Registered Manager meets individually with the young people on a regular basis and these sessions are recorded. Records show the Registered Manager consultations result in a variety of actions taking place, such as new furniture being bought for the home. In addition, these sessions also demonstrate how young people are appropriately supported to understand why not all their requests are actioned. Senior staff also facilitate exit interviews with young people who have left. These consultations record feedback on young people's time living in the home and capture constructive comments for improvement. Young people also have access to an advocacy service who visit the home on a monthly basis. These systems demonstrate to young people that their views are important and listened to.

Young people's placement plans and risk assessments clearly identify their unique needs. These are regularly updated and reviewed to ensure staff refer to current information. A strength of the home is the positive partnership working with external professionals. These include education and health workers. As a result, young people's health and education outcomes are improving. The home is maintained to a good standard overall. There is a suitable plan of re-decoration in place to refresh some areas of the home which require it. The home is located near to public transport links and local shops. This supports the good community engagement which takes place. Young people like their bedrooms and chose their own colours and wall decorations. Young people enjoy taking care of and feeding the house fishes. This gives young people an appropriately supervised responsibility. Around the home are large photo displays celebrating young people's achievements and activities

undertaken. This provides a positive reminder for all of individual accomplishments.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are positive about the home and some young people say they feel safe in the home. There has not been any use of restraint since the last inspection. Young people do not identify bullying behaviours within the home. Allegations or suspicions of harm are shared appropriately with the police and safeguarding professionals. However, not all relevant significant events have been shared with Ofsted. This does not ensure the regulator is fully informed in line with regulatory requirements.

Since the last inspection there have been some incidents which have involved police attending the home to assist in managing some young people's challenging behaviour and also because of young people causing damage. Currently there are no agreed procedures for staff to follow in relation to when to involve the police in such incidents. This risks both an inconsistent approach from staff and also potentially unnecessarily criminalising young people.

The home has introduced a new reward system which was named by a young person 'your life, your choice'. As this system is relatively new, its impact cannot be fully evaluated as yet. Young people are positively engaged with this incentive programme and fully understand how they can achieve rewards. There have been 44 sanctions applied since the last inspection. However, only 11 of the entries within the log state whether the sanction set was successful or not. Furthermore, young people's views on sanctions are rarely recorded. This hinders the Registered Manager's ability to effectively monitor and evaluate whether sanctions are effective and fair. There have been three sanctions applied which relate to young people leaving the home without permission. This is not a positive response for young people who place themselves at risk by going missing and is not in line with statutory guidance.

Since the last inspection there have been 8 episodes where a young person has been reported missing from the home. Staff follow agreed procedures and actively search for young people. Senior staff attend the local multi-agency 'missing forum'. This means that they keep up-to-date with local intelligence relating to the area where the home is located and this further supports positive working together with other agencies. Recruitment and vetting checks for new staff meet regulatory requirements and national minimum standards. This ensures the safety of all young people within the home. There are effective health and safety routines in place. This creates an environment which is safe and hazard free.

Leadership and management

adequate

Since the last inspection, a manager has been registered with Ofsted and undertakes part-time hours within the home. He has achieved relevant qualifications in NVQ level 4 management and the Registered Manager's award. His most recent management experience relates to managing a secure children's home for nearly 10 years. As a result, he is familiar with children's home regulations and the needs of young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

The remaining part-time hours of the Registered Manager role remain un-registered. Although a member of staff has been appointed to this part-time position, they have not yet submitted a complete application to Ofsted. This means that this home has been without a full-time Registered Manager since January 2014. This does not offer the home consistent and stable leadership.

The statement of purpose does not include the age range of young people to which the home offers accommodation. This is a regulatory requirement. As a result, the statement of purpose fails to describe clearly how the home will meet the individual needs of young people as there is no specified age range. The statement of purpose describes providing care for young people who have 'very complex emotional and behavioural needs which have invariably led to multiple breakdowns in previous placements'. However, some young people have been cared for within the home who have a learning disability and challenging behaviours. The senior management team cannot clearly demonstrate how safe and appropriate placement decisions are made in line with the statement of purpose. This risks inappropriate placements affecting both potential and currently placed young people, although no negative impact was identified during this inspection.

The paper-based children's guide does contain an age range. However, it does not include all the required information such as a summary of the complaints procedure and the Ofsted address. The home has also created a computer-based children's guide which offers young people an interactive introduction to the home. However, this was inaccessible during the inspection due to changes within the local authority computer system. As a consequence, young people do not currently have a full and comprehensive guide to the home either paper or computer-based. This could raise anxiety for some young people who are newly resident in the home.

Since the last inspection there have been two significant events relating to the welfare of young people which were not notified to Ofsted in line with regulatory requirements. Although appropriate action has been taken in relation to these incidents, the regulator has not been kept up-to-date in order that the safeguarding arrangements can be evaluated.

A previous recommendation was set to ensure that internal monitoring reports are submitted to Ofsted in line with required regulatory timescales. This has been fully met. This now ensures that the regulator is kept up-to-date with the outcome of in-

house reviews of the performance of the home. However, these internal reports do not contain any evaluation of feedback from young people, family members or social workers, even though this information is gathered by the senior management team. As a result, the reports do not show how the Registered Manager is listening to and learning from comments about the quality of care from these sources.

Staff feel well-supported by the senior leadership team. They have regular supervision and performance appraisal. Staff undertake training in safe caring skills and since the last inspection this has included e-safety awareness and child sexual exploitation. This keeps staff updated with professional and practice developments.

Visits by the independent person take place on a monthly basis. These visits meet regulatory requirements and involve the voice of young people. However, these reports lack robust challenge. Over the past 12 months there have been no good practice recommendations set as a result these external visits. This does not assist the Registered Manager in improving the quality of care within the home.

At the last inspection, a recommendation was set to improve the quality of child protection records. This has been met. A new bound log is in place which details safeguarding and child protection concerns in chronological order. This provides clear records and assists the Registered Manager with effective auditing of this important information. The Registered Manager has a 'performance improvement plan' in place which focuses the staff team on enhancing young people's outcomes further.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.