

SC373958

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties. The home is operated by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
---	------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers are aspirational and ambitious for the young people. They have created a culture in which the staff provide the young people with high-quality, individualised care and opportunities for each young person to have hope for a positive future. Young people achieve their potential.
- The registered manager leads the staff team with energy and commitment, modelling excellent practice in supporting the young people. He leads by example, building positive relationships with the young people to gain an in-depth understanding of their specific needs. This assists the staff in providing appropriate care and support.
- Recent training for the staff in implementing a therapeutic parenting approach to the care of the young people is having a positive effect on their understanding of the young people's behaviour, and on their approach to providing specific support.
- Managers are vigilant in their monitoring of the quality of care provided for the young people. Through their close review of the young people's progress, they promptly address shortfalls and take action to improve practice. This promotes the young people's positive development.
- Managers take a highly constructive approach to working with the young people's families and external professionals. Working together effectively, they help keep the young people safe and support them to achieve positive outcomes.
- Extremely positive relationships are at the heart of practice in the home. The young people feel safe knowing that the staff listen to them and respond to their particular needs.
- The young people, who have complex needs, are making significant progress and, as a result, their life chances are improving.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff use a bedroom door alarm to alert them when a young person's door is opened at night. This practice has not been individually risk assessed to ensure that it is no more intrusive than is necessary and that it does not impinge on the young person's need for privacy.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/09/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/10/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Statutory requirements

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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24(1)(d))	27/10/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff deliver effective individualised care within a nurturing environment where the young people develop, have opportunities to learn to manage their emotions appropriately, and keep themselves safe. The young people are making significant progress in their behaviour and other aspects of their lives. The staff are resilient and persistent in supporting the young people with their complex emotional needs. A social worker commented, 'The staff are always looking at different ways to approach and support the young person, who is making progress in small but very significant steps.' Another social worker commented, 'The staff go above and beyond in terms of supporting the young person. The staff managed the young person's behaviour, which was often challenging, with innovative and caring approaches.'

The young people have a strong voice in the home. They confidently express their views, knowing that the staff will listen and value their opinions. The manager ensures that the young people receive a response to their suggestions, wishes and feelings, whether these relate to very specific aspects of their care, their futures, or particular requests about young people's day-to-day life at the home. The staff focus on listening to the young people, finding out what their long-term goals are and building these into their planning and support. The managers and the staff are ambitious for the young people. Through staff's high-quality care, which includes effective outreach support when the young people leave the home, the young people's life chances are enhanced. The young people experience warmth and attentiveness from the staff and develop trusting relationships, knowing that the staff will respond to their needs.

Education is highly valued by the staff. The staff work effectively with school staff and with the virtual school to ensure that the young people have positive educational opportunities appropriate to their needs. The young people benefit from this

collaborative approach. One young person has recently improved their attendance from 46% to 76%. The head of the virtual school commented, 'The staff are supportive of all aspects of education, are aspirational for young people and actively contribute.' Another member of the virtual school staff stated that the staff are 'always open to share and work with new ideas and strategies we try to put in regarding education'. One young person has been honoured as student of the year. The achievement was warmly celebrated in the home.

Close monitoring of the young people's physical and emotional health ensures that the staff identify their specific needs and that they are clear about what young people need in order to be healthier and happier. The staff consistently prioritise young people's emotional and physical well-being, offering good advice and guidance on a healthy lifestyle alongside specific support when necessary. The staff ensure that the young people receive specialist assessment and help from external health professionals when needed. Close partnership working with the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) includes the attendance of a CAMHS therapist at staff team meetings to advise and guide the staff on implementing appropriate strategies. This supports the young people's emotional well-being.

The young people receive valuable support to maintain and improve the time they spend with friends and family. The managers and the staff are persistent in engaging with the young people's families and in building relationships with them. Young people benefit from their families and the staff working closely together to help the young people to achieve their goals. With the support of staff, one young person has returned to live with their family. This was a positive outcome for the young person. Another young person is benefiting from a review of these arrangements with increased opportunities for them to spend time with their family. The staff and the family are working together well to promote the young person's safety.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff are successful in providing a stable and safe environment where the young people settle well. Through close supervision, thoughtful and consistent staff care, and with clear structure and boundaries, the young people develop positive, trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. They feel safe living at the home and know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries or concerns.

The staff understand the particular risks relating to each young person. Risk assessments provide specific guidance for the staff to reduce the potential for harm. Care plans are up to date, with clear strategies to guide the staff in providing effective interventions and appropriate measures to protect the young people and promote their development. The staff link the content of frequent one-to-one sessions with the young people to the objectives in the young people's plans. Some one-to-one sessions with young people include a discussion about why staff are worried about them, enabling the young people to develop an understanding of keeping themselves safe. The staff and managers regularly review care plans and risk assessments to ensure that they remain relevant to the young people's developing needs.

The staff use a bedroom door alarm to alert them when a young person's door is

opened at night. This practice has not been individually risk assessed to ensure that it is no more intrusive than necessary and that it does not impinge on the young person's need for privacy.

Strategies for supporting the young people focus on reinforcing positive behaviour, rather than punishing them for inappropriate behaviour. The staff are resilient when faced with periods of challenging behaviour, continuing to explore the reasons for the young person's behaviour. As staff get to know and understand the young people, they are able to de-escalate difficult situations effectively. The staff use physical intervention rarely, and there have been no incidents requiring such intervention since the last inspection.

The staff respond effectively when a young person leaves the home without permission. Staff apply agreed procedures to safeguard the young person and to ensure their safe return. One-to-one sessions with the young person provide targeted support to address such high-risk behaviour and to help them to develop an awareness of the risks they face. Supported by the intense work undertaken by the staff, and the registered manager's engagement with young people's families, some young people are making good progress in reducing the incidences of being absent from the home without permission.

The staff receive comprehensive training in relation to all safeguarding matters such as e-safety, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. The staff's appreciation of the dangers that the young people face increases their vigilance in identifying potential risks and protective measures. Appropriate action is taken by managers to address any safeguarding concerns effectively, including making referrals to external agencies.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers provide the staff team with energetic and highly effective leadership. They are aspirational and ambitious for the young people, guiding the staff team to provide the young people with opportunities to achieve their potential and to have hope for the future. The registered manager has been in post since July 2016. He leads by example, spending time with the young people to build positive relationships with them. He has developed a clear understanding of the young people's specific needs, and this supports the staff in providing appropriate strategies of support. A member of staff commented, 'Managers are very supportive and hands-on. They are involved with the staff and the young people. The registered manager completely understands the job that the staff are doing.' The registered manager and the deputy manager model excellent practice in supporting the young people.

Training for the experienced and stable staff team is comprehensive, ensuring that staff perform their roles competently. Recent training for the staff in implementing a therapeutic parenting approach to their care of the young people is having a positive effect on their understanding of the young people's behaviour, and on their approach in providing support. A member of staff stated that they 'now deal differently with confrontation and conflict'. The staff team's knowledge of attachment theory and the effects of trauma on children's development enables it to adapt support strategies to meet the young people's individual needs effectively. Individual, regular supervision for

the staff is reflective and centred on the young people's needs, with action points to improve practice. The staff receive regular reviews of their training and development plans to improve the quality of care that they provide for the young people.

Managers are vigilant in monitoring the quality of care provided for the young people. Through their close review of the young people's progress, they promptly address shortfalls, and take appropriate action to improve practice. The registered manager has recently led an initiative to improve the frequency and quality of one-to-one sessions with the young people. The staff record all one-to-one sessions in detail and the registered manager or deputy review the records, providing the key worker with constructive comments and suggestions for follow-up action. This focus on individualised, targeted support is having a positive impact on the young people's progress and development. The young people's involvement in leisure pursuits is also carefully monitored. Recognising the positive impact young people's participation in meaningful activities has on their behaviour, the registered manager thoughtfully reviews how the young people spend their leisure time. A team improvement plan clearly demonstrates a sharp focus on further improving the quality of care.

The registered manager also monitors the effectiveness of working relationships with external partner agencies. He is working proactively with the local police and safeguarding agencies to improve the process for ensuring that the young people have access to independent return interviews when they return from going missing.

Managers take an extremely constructive approach to working with the young people's families and external professionals involved in the young people's care. Through positive relationships, managers, the staff team, families and professionals work together to help keep the young people safe and to help them achieve positive outcomes. Managers understand the long-term plans for the young people and effectively oversee the support provided by the staff to help the young people achieve their goals.

The registered manager and senior leaders within the organisation demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving the quality of care for the young people. Strategic decisions have resulted in an increase in staff numbers to provide the level of intensive, stable and consistent support that young people who have complex needs require. Recruitment practice has been reviewed with a greater focus on core values, personal motivation and the emotional resilience of applicants. The aim is to ensure that young people benefit from relationships with adults who are committed to helping them achieve their full potential. Recruitment practice is also designed to identify applicants who are capable of upholding safeguarding standards while creating a warm and nurturing environment.

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.

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: SC373958

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, St. Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex
BN7 1UE

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Rugg

Registered manager: Scott Lipa

Inspector

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017