

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>08/09/2016</b>                                                           |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC373958</b>                                                             |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                                      |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>East Sussex County Council</b>                                           |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>County Hall, St. Annes<br/>Crescent, LEWES, East Sussex,<br/>BN7 1UE</b> |

|                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Elizabeth Rugg</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Janet Fairless</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Jan Hunnam</b>     |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>08/09/2016</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Improved effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                   |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                               |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                   |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                               |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                   |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                   |

**SC373958**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Staff provide warm, nurturing care for young people with complex needs. Young people benefit from individualised support and develop a sense of stability and security.
- Young people form trusting relationships with staff who listen, respond to their needs and show them that they are valued and cared for.
- Managers and staff work effectively with external agencies to protect young people. Strategies to reduce the risks associated with young people being away from the home without permission are continually reviewed to safeguard young people.
- The manager provides strong and committed leadership and management. He has a clear vision to drive improvement and promote positive outcomes for young people.
- The manager and staff work collaboratively with parents and social workers to ensure that young people's care promotes their safety and well-being.
- Staff receive training and supervision which develops their practice and ensures that they have the knowledge and skills to support young people effectively. Not all staff have achieved the required qualification within the specified timescale.
- Not all reports of young people being missing contain comprehensive information about staff actions to safeguard young people when they are away from the home or details of their interview on their return.

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

### 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 (England) Regulations 2015 and '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 must ensure that all staff have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work that the individual is to perform, and has attained the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(3)(b)(5)(a)(b))                                                                                                                   | 31/01/2017 |
| The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3, particularly in relation to the date and circumstances of all incidents where a child goes missing from the home, including any information relating to the child's whereabouts during the period of absence. (Regulation 36(1)(a)) | 04/11/2016 |

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

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

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 01/03/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 14/10/2015      | Full            | Requires improvement   |
| 04/03/2015      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 03/06/2014      | Full            | Adequate               |

## Inspection judgements

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people are happy and relaxed, living at the home. They benefit from living in a stable environment where they feel valued and safe, knowing that staff will respond to their individual needs. Young people grow in confidence and self-esteem as they develop trusting relationships with staff. They know that their opinions are important to staff and they confidently express their views.</p> <p>Weekly meetings provide opportunities for young people to comment and make suggestions on day-to-day matters affecting their experience of living in the home. They make suggestions for activities, menus and discuss issues around such topics as e-safety and keeping themselves safe. Young people know how to make a complaint and use the procedure to make their views known. Managers respond fully to the issues that they raise, demonstrating to young people that they take their views seriously.</p> <p>Staff promote the value of education and work extremely hard to help young people to attend school and engage in their education. When difficulties arise, staff are proactive in liaising with the virtual school to ensure that young people have access to an educational placement that will assist them in fulfilling their academic potential. Attendance for some young people is excellent, while staff are providing support for others to improve their attendance and encourage participation in learning.</p> <p>Staff use activities as positive strategies to divert young people from negative peer group influences in the local community and to extend their social experiences. Young people have enjoyed a visit to Thorpe Park and a day trip to Edinburgh on an aeroplane, as well as more local activities such as the cinema and dog walking.</p> <p>Staff promote a healthy lifestyle with a focus on healthy eating and exercise. They closely monitor young people's health and ensure that they receive specialist services according to their individual needs, such as support from the substance misuse team and assessment by the child and adolescent mental health service. Young people's emotional and psychological well-being has a high priority. A clinical psychologist from this service commented that, 'despite a young person having significant attachment difficulties and being very difficult to look after at times, they continue to show care and support so that the young person is able to trust and accept care and warmth from staff'.</p> <p>Staff work proactively with young people's families to promote and maintain positive relationships. Effective planning and review of contact arrangements,</p> |                 |

taking into consideration young people's views and wishes, supports them to have safe contact with their families.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The home provides a safe and nurturing environment for young people. Staff provide warm and friendly care, treating each young person as a unique individual. Strong boundaries, routines and structure help young people to develop a sense of safety and stability. Young people respond to staff and develop trusting relationships as they realise that staff not only care for them but care about them.</p> <p>Staff identify and understand the risks associated with each young person and their specific needs. Clear strategies guide staff in providing individualised care and implementing protective measures to reduce the potential of harm. Staff regularly review these plans to ensure that they remain relevant to young people's developing needs and provide effective interventions to protect them. Strategies focus on reinforcing positive behaviour, rather than punishing young people for inappropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Physical intervention is used very rarely and only when necessary to reduce the risk of harm to young people or others or serious damage to property. There have been only two incidents requiring physical intervention since the last inspection. Staff follow up such events in discussion with the young person, and managers consider the action taken with the staff involved. Staff receive training to ensure that they use restraint safely. They know the young people very well and implement effective de-escalation strategies, thus reducing the necessity for physical intervention to manage challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Staff evidently understand the risks associated with both young people leaving the home without permission and child exploitation. There have been frequent incidents of young people being absent from the home without permission and being reported as missing. Managers have been proactive in addressing serious concerns relating to these incidents. They have convened professionals meetings to discuss risk management, referred child protection issues and liaised closely with external agencies to implement multi-agency protective measures. New strategies, focusing on engaging young people actively in positive activities and intense one-to-one work to develop their understanding of keeping themselves safe, are showing some success as young people begin to make better choices. One young person's high-risk behaviour in staying away from the home without permission is reducing. Revised contact arrangements have been agreed so that a young person has safe, supported family contact rather than leaving the home without permission to see their family.</p> |                 |

The quality of recording incidents when young people are missing is variable. Not all reports contain comprehensive information about staff action to safeguard young people when they have left the home. Neither do reports clearly evidence that young people have been offered an independent return interview. Senior managers within the organisation have commissioned a voluntary organisation to complete the return interviews. They are currently liaising with the organisation to provide the home with details of these interviews to evidence that interviews are being consistently offered to young people when they have returned to the home.

Robust recruitment processes are in place to protect young people from unsuitable adults working with them. Checks on prospective employees are undertaken before they commence work at the home. A requirement made at a previous inspection to improve recruitment practice has been met.

Health and safety checks are up to date. Appropriate fire safety measures are routinely applied.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>A new manager has been in post since July 2016. He is suitably experienced for the role and is enrolled on the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. He is in the process of applying to Ofsted for registration. He has a clear vision for developing the home, which he is implementing with energy and drive. Supported by a new, enthusiastic and competent deputy manager, he provides strong, effective leadership and support for the staff team, based on a clear understanding of the individual needs of young people.</p> <p>An experienced staff team provides consistency and continuity for young people so that they settle at the home and respond well to the support offered by staff. Staff receive effective induction and training relevant to their role to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support young people's development. Managers regularly review goals set through personal development plans to ensure that young people's care continually improves. Supervision for staff is regular and thorough, with a focus on meeting young people's individual needs and protecting them. Staff are developing a reflective approach to their practice, which is assisting them to evaluate and improve support strategies for young people. Most staff have a level 3 qualification or are embarking on the diploma. However, two staff have not completed the qualification within the required timescale.</p> <p>Managers are committed to providing high standards of care, addressing shortfalls and improving outcomes for young people. The continuous review of records and staff practice contribute to their full understanding of activity within the home and young people's progress. Monthly reports from an independent visitor identify</p> |                 |

action points to address any shortfalls. The manager's six-monthly report presents a detailed and comprehensive review, with specific actions identified and timescales, to improve standards of care and develop the home. A new monitoring tool enables managers to analyse patterns and trends in young people's behaviour and evaluate the success of current support strategies. Young people benefit from this effective quality assurance system and improve their behaviour as managers and staff change approaches, better to suit their needs. The manager is currently focusing on refining staff practice through closer observation and identification of where it needs to improve, for example recording and report writing, and updating the physical environment.

The recently revised statement of purpose sets out the ethos, aims and objectives of the home and the range of services that it provides for young people. Managers and staff are fulfilling the statement of purpose.

Staff work positively and effectively with other agencies and professionals, including the local authority designated officer, health professionals, substance misuse team and the police. These constructive relationships enable young people to benefit from enhanced support to meet their complex needs. A social worker commented that 'communication is brilliant' and is pleased that managers and staff work so well with her to plan a young person's care. Managers are proactive in challenging plans that are not effective in protecting young people. For one young person, this has resulted in increased contact visits with their family as a strategy to reduce their high-risk behaviour of leaving the home without permission.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **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 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 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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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