

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	02/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC376719
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Reflexion Care Group Limited
Registered provider address	Reflexion Care Group Limited, Black Birches, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 3DH

Responsible individual	Gregory Watson
Registered manager	Claire Peate
Inspector	Paul Robinson

Inspection date	02/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC376719

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Creative and dedicated staff support young people to make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Young people are proud to be associated with the staff and their home.
- Relationships between staff and young people are very positive.
- Staff place considerable time and energy into helping young people to make meaningful progress in their education. This includes enthusiastically celebrating the smallest of achievements.
- Staff take time to listen to young people and are committed to ensuring that the best possible outcomes are achieved.
- Staff ensure that the accommodation provides young people with a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment, which gives them a sense of belonging.
- Staff are knowledgeable about risks that can compromise young people's safety. This includes taking effective action in response to receiving information that might mean that young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation or radicalisation.
- Outstanding support from integrated therapeutic services helps to play a key role in improving young people's emotional health and resilience.
- Staff work proactively with partnership agencies including the police and placing authorities to ensure that a collaborative approach is achieved, with the aim of keeping young people safe.
- The registered manager has an excellent awareness of the strengths of the staff team.
- The registered manager and staff use research to understand how best to support young people who have a range of complex needs.
- Staff are skilled, knowledgeable and insightful in their support of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/11/2015	Full	Outstanding
04/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/12/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
As a direct result of the exceptional care that young people receive, all are making excellent progress from their starting points. The enthusiastic and motivated staff work together to provide young people with highly personalised care. A social worker told the inspector, '[The young person] requires a lot of understanding, time, patience and firmness. The staff work together to provide this and from what I can see there are no weak links in the staff team; each have their own strengths and support each other.' Staff care about young people in a warm, nurturing and friendly way. One member of staff told the inspector, 'It doesn't matter what has happened that day, nobody goes to bed without a big hug.' Staff excitedly plan for events such as Christmas and birthdays, arranging surprises and hiding away presents. Specially made cakes, balloons and banners ensure that young people have many happy memories of these significant events. As a result, young people receive care from staff who care deeply about them and understand their needs extremely well. Staff are imaginative and creative with the result that young people have a homely and welcoming environment in which to live. For example, an elaborate wall mural includes a house family tree, with pictures of young people and staff on each branch. Young people who are equally creative are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and communal areas. For example, talented young people take ownership of the home using their art skills to design wall art and to customise light fittings. A young person told the inspector, 'It doesn't feel like a children's home. It's just my home. I don't ever want to leave really.' This shows that young people have formed strong, meaningful connections that help them to gain a sense of belonging. Staff ensure that the voice of the young person is heard. This is achieved through informal conversations, house meetings, key work sessions and consultation questionnaires. Staff show insight into how best to get young people to open up and talk, this includes taking a young person for a drive, sitting and doing artwork or just having a cup of tea together before bedtime. Young people told the inspector that they feel listened to and that they know that staff care for them. When a young person makes a complaint, staff respond swiftly and address the issues. Staff who are committed to understanding young people's views and wishes enable young people to contribute to the care that they receive. Staff highly value education and are proactive in helping young people to overcome the barriers to learning. Staff work hand in hand with education providers to coordinate the support offered to young people. This includes daily handovers, attendance at planning meetings and where necessary sending staff into school	

with the young person. As a result, young people who had a history of low attendance, and poor attitudes towards learning, now attend regularly, make educational progress and are enthusiastic about their own learning and future. A pastoral manager told the inspector, 'Communication has been excellent. They let us know if anything is going on or if anything has happened the night before. We have had some really productive meetings, we keep in very close contact and we work well together.'

Staff are diligent about young people's health needs, supporting them to access primary healthcare such as their general practitioner, dentist and opticians. Staff use their strong links with the integrated therapy team to ensure that young people receive tailored support to address their emotional health needs. This includes staff offering affection, having daily discussions, offering praise and showing that they genuinely care. A therapist told the inspector, 'The staff work really hard, they role model positive behaviour and are consistent in their approach. [The young person] has made considerable progress.'

Staff utilise research into early life trauma and attachment in order to increase their understanding and awareness of the childhood experiences of young people. Young people's emotional and physical health improves because staff have insight into their individual needs and offer excellent support.

Dedicated staff provide young people with the encouragement and motivation to succeed in life. This includes making significant achievements in their pathway to adulthood. For example, one young person has a part-time job. This is a fantastic accomplishment considering the young person's starting point. When a young person is struggling with a certain aspect of their personalised independence plan, staff offer short- and long-term incentives to encourage the young person to re-engage.

Staff plan exceptionally well for new admissions to ensure that young people are able to settle quickly. For example, the registered manager agreed for one young person to be able to maintain their staff team from an existing placement. The outcome was that the young person made a seamless transition and was in the best position to continue to make remarkable progress in respect of their educational, social and emotional development. This demonstrates the registered manager's excellent insight into the individual needs of young people and a willingness to be flexible in order to best support young people.

Staff value young people's contact with families, encouraging young people to make use of phone calls when families live a long distance away. Staff try to make contacts positive and memorable, for example ensuring that a young person had a second birthday cake so that they were able to celebrate the event with their family. This support allows young people to sustain meaningful relationships with people who are important to them.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Safeguarding and risk management are the foundation of good practice for every member of staff. Staff have a strong understanding of risk and work tirelessly to ensure that potential risks for young people are managed effectively. Young people told the inspector that they felt safe. One young person said, 'I definitely feel safe. If I didn't, I would speak to [the manager] or staff and I know they would help me.' Young people become increasingly safe because staff have excellent insight into their individual risk profiles. Staff regularly review risk assessments in order to consider if their actions remain right and to reflect on the progress made by the young person. Staff recognise the importance of this live document in keeping young people safe. Intuitive staff use creative ways to address young people's inappropriate behaviours. Staff use verbal praise and rewards such as a meal out, a new book, coffee and cake or a pamper night to promote positive behaviour. When a young person displays inappropriate behaviour, staff use reflective therapeutic interviews to support young people to reflect and learn from their actions. A social worker told the inspector, 'Since being placed here, [the young person] has settled very well and from the off took to the home's rules and boundaries. The staff really got the measure of [the young person] very quickly and worked with him to make a plan that suited him and that he would be able to stick to. He has had opportunities to go on holiday, take part in activities and has flourished because of this.' The staff's approach to behaviour management has meant that young people have reduced their challenging behaviour and instead made safe decisions about their welfare. Because of the strong relationships with staff, young people make the decision not to go missing. However, staff remain vigilant to the likelihood of such incidents occurring. Staff have worked with the police to implement trigger plans to ensure that a coordinated approach is in place to dealing with such incidents. Staff have also put into operation a grab bag with essential items such as a torch, high visibility jacket and young person key information document. This ensures that staff are able to act swiftly in keeping young people safe. Intensive therapeutic support enables those young people who are identified as being at potential risk of self-harm to develop the emotional resilience to reduce the use of such maladaptive behaviours. Staff are sensitive to potential triggers that may result in a deterioration in a young person's emotional state and ensure that the required support is in place. Strong relationships mean that young people seek support from staff when they are struggling and in need of extra help. Staff, who have completed research-based training in self-harm, demonstrate a solid understanding of how to reduce the potential risk.	

Staff are alert to young people's vulnerability to exploitation. Staff actively review this risk to ensure that clear plans are in place to keep young people safe. When an event occurred which was out of the control of the staff, but which resulted in a young person being placed at risk, staff took decisive action to reduce the impact of this. For example, staff dealt with the immediate risk, restricting access to phones and the internet, working closely with the police and placing authority to agree the next steps.

Staff recognise the importance of providing young people with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe. For example, staff have used online resources and videos to educate young people about the risk of exploitation.

Staff are not risk averse, recognising that young people need to be afforded age-appropriate opportunities to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, young people are allowed increased free time with restrictions and monitoring gradually being reduced as they demonstrate the skills and abilities to keep themselves safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been in post since April 2011 and is qualified to national vocational qualification level 4 in leadership and management for care services. The majority of staff have completed the diploma level 3 in residential childcare or equivalent. All remaining staff will have achieved this qualification by April 2018, which will be in two years of starting in the relevant post. The registered manager and staff demonstrate a strong understanding of young people's childhood journeys. This knowledge has helped staff to identified and overcome the barriers to young people making progress in respect of their educational, emotional and social development. As a result, staff are responsive to the individual needs of young people and offer tailored support to ensure that young people are able to make and sustain outstanding progress across the full range of development areas compared with their starting points. The staff team mirrors the registered manager's child-focused and enthusiastic approach. Staff consistently told the inspector that the registered manager is supportive, helpful and encouraging of their development and progress. The registered manager leads a highly skilled and experienced staff team that presents with natural ability to provide high-quality care to young people. Staff value the reflective supervisions and purposeful team meetings and say that the training offered by the provider is comprehensive, interesting and really helps them to understand how to support young people to make progress and keep safe in line with the statement of purpose. The registered manager's awareness of the strengths of her staff team ensures that young people experience a consistently	

high standard of care from staff who are motivated and well trained.

New staff benefit from a well-planned induction, which helps to maintain a consistent level of care for young people. This includes three weeks off-site training in child protection, therapeutic care and behaviour management, as well as opportunities to shadow experienced staff and the benefit of more frequent supervision.

Communication is at the heart of the manager's practice, resulting in a shared understanding and approach to meeting the needs of the young people. The registered manager has developed highly effective relationships with partner agencies including the police, education providers and placing authorities. This collaborative approach has negated the need for the registered manager to challenge partner agencies to date.

The registered manager takes positive steps to gather the views of parents, young people, social workers and other professionals about the quality of care provided by the home. Effective action is taken in response to these and to other comments.

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

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