

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381089
Inspector	Matthew Hedges
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Stoke on Trent City Council
Registered person address	City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre Glebe Street STOKE-ON-TRENT ST4 1HH
Responsible individual	Susan Hammersley
Registered manager	Linda Jane Dent
Date of last inspection	18/02/2014

Inspection date	22/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress in key areas of their life. Education attendance increases and supports improved attainment. Risk taking and anti-social behaviour reduces and young people make healthier choices. In addition, young people's confidence and self-esteem improves. This is underpinned by effective, individualised support offered by a committed staff team who work consistently. Staff and young people have strong relationships and young people talk positively about the support they receive.

Staff show a good understanding of safeguarding and missing from home is significantly reduced. Positive behaviour is promoted and unsafe situations are well managed. There has been no use of physical restraint in the last 12 months. Young people are clear that they feel safe.

The Registered Manager has fostered strong relationships with other agencies including the police. They understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and this ensures improvements within the home.

Some shortfalls have been identified at this inspection. These relate to the home's Statement of Purpose, the monitoring arrangements, and some aspects of record keeping. In addition, records of discussions with young people who have been

missing are not always available within the home. The impact of these shortfalls is reduced by other processes and the relationships that exist between staff, young people, and other agencies.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2014	Interim	good progress
08/05/2013	Full	good
20/12/2012	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	Full	good

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))	05/12/2014
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which is kept up to date (Regulation 28 (1) (b))	05/12/2014
29 (2001)	maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date, specifically in relation to medication records and fire drills (Regulation 29	05/12/2014

	(1))	
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent person, shall interview the children accommodated, parents, relatives and staff to form an opinion as to whether children accommodated are effectively safeguarded; and the home promotes the wellbeing of the children accommodated there (Regulation 33 (8) (a))	05/12/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months. (Regulation 34 (1))	05/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons. This information is shared with the responsible authority and where appropriate, their parents. (NMS 5.10)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in key areas of their life.

Young people develop a positive self-view and their confidence improves. A teacher commented that a young person, 'is much happier, they feel settled and they have developed a lot more confidence in themselves.'

Young people's educational achievement improves through increased attendance at school or college. A young person stated that they felt happy in education and was rightly proud that they had achieved GCSE's last year. Education providers also talk positively about this. A headteacher noted, 'clear progress' which was underpinned by, 'excellent attendance between 90 percent and 100 percent.' Another teacher also highlighted, 'massive improvements'. This helps young people to achieve their potential and prepares them for later life.

Young people are confident regarding their independence skills and these have improved since living at the home. Education professionals also talk positively about the improvements that have been made in this area. They identify that this also helps young people in school, particularly in practical areas such as cooking. This ensures young people are equipped with the skills that they need.

Offending has reduced significantly for all young people living at the home. This helps young people to focus on more constructive aspects of their life and engage more positively with staff and others.

Young people are actively involved in community activities. Examples of this include fundraising for various charities. This is celebrated which helps young people to feel proud of themselves.

Young people are confident in expressing their views and they are able to make decisions affecting their life. For example, deciding how to stay in touch with people who are important to them. This ensures that young people feel their views are valued. Young people see their friends and family regularly. This helps young people to better understand their background.

Young people are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and understand that some things are bad for their health. This ensures that risk taking behaviours such as drug and alcohol use, and risks to their sexual health, decrease.

Quality of care **good**

Young people are cared for by a committed staff team who are concerned with their welfare. Excellent relationships exist between staff and young people. These relationships are further developed through a range of positive activities. One young person commented that the home, 'is a good place to live...staff really help' and that 'the staff are the best thing about the home'.

Young people develop positive relationships and are equipped with skills in managing conflict. This is underpinned by positive, individualised behaviour strategies employed by staff. 'Grumbles' between young people are well managed. A social worker felt that the key to this was the skill and consistency of the staff team.

Care plans are very individualised, include young people's input and outline clear plans for them. Some information in these plans is not always kept up to date. Specifically this relates to the contact arrangements for some young people. The impact of this is minimal due to a consistent staff team that are aware of the arrangements in place.

Staff work hard to support educational attendance and address any barriers young people may face. If young people have specific issues in particular subjects staff work with them and their education placement to try and resolve these. Additional support outside of school hours has been sought for young people that require it. Other young people also attended a summer scheme during the school holidays. A headteacher spoke positively about the communication and joint working with the home. She explained that there are regular meetings between the Registered Manager and herself. In addition, staff talk every day to young people's teachers so that any issues can be addressed quickly. This helps young people to feel safe and well-supported and has improved education attendance dramatically.

Staff encourage young people to develop knowledge in relation to their own background, culture or particular interests. For example one young person wanted to go on a trip abroad to a country they have a particular interest in. The young person undertook a presentation to their education provider and secured some funding for this, which the home has agreed to match.

Staff work proactively and positively with other agencies such as the police, education and mental health services. This ensures that young people are kept safe and that they have access to the services that they need.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Medication is stored and administered appropriately. Accurate records are kept on young people's files. However, these records do not stay in the home after young people have moved out. This has no direct impact on young people who receive the right medication at the right time.

The home is nicely decorated and homely. Young people personalise their own bedrooms and often decorate them themselves, supported by staff. This helps staff and young people to take pride in the home. Damage to the home is rare.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe and can identify adults that they trust.

Risk assessments are individualised and identify risk factors. Strategies are in place to address these and these are monitored by the Registered Manager to ensure their effectiveness.

Staff ensure that behaviour management strategies are based on promoting positive behaviour. These strategies are individualised and are consistently applied by the staff team and managers. Rewards are frequently given. Young people are also supported to learn that their behaviour has consequences. Often this is achieved through restorative conversations with staff.

No physical restraint has been used since October 2013. This is a considerable improvement for many young people who were restrained regularly in previous placements. This supports positive relationships and helps young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Neither staff nor young people feel that bullying is an issue at the home

Some young people do go missing. However this has significantly reduced. Staff understand the risks that may be present for young people who go missing and robust action is taken. This action is underpinned by clear protocols agreed with the police. This confirms to young people that staff care, and has helped to reduce the number of incidents. Young people are welcomed back on their return and will talk to staff about why they went missing. In addition, young people also see an independent person and generally engage well in this discussion. Records of these discussions also show reasons why young people have been missing. They are shared with the police but not all of the records are sent to the home. The impact of this is reduced by excellent relationships between the home and the police. Social workers and education staff confirm that staff are, 'very good' at working with young people to reduce missing episodes.

The home has strong relationships with the police and they work proactively together. Police often visit the home, including specialist officers that work with vulnerable people. This has led to positive relationships between police officers and young people. Formal structures also exist that ensure that key information is shared effectively. This approach protects young people.

Recruitment checks meet the required standard and staff understand the

whistleblowing process. This helps to ensure that unsafe adults are not employed by the home.

The home is physically safe. Checks in key areas such as fire safety are regular and help keep staff and young people safe. Fire drills are recorded but do not include details of actions taken when issues occur. The impact of this is minimal due to the other processes in place.

Leadership and management

good

The home is managed by an enthusiastic Registered Manager who is committed to the staff and young people. The Registered Manager has been registered since 2008 and holds the level five diploma in caring for children and young people.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the previous inspection. The Registered Manager is aware of the homes strengths, identifies areas of weakness and takes action to improve.

There are regular visits to the home by an independent person and young people are consulted with as part of this process. Reports are sent to Ofsted in a timely way. However the reports lack detail or analysis. The Registered Manager had already identified this shortfall. A new visitor has been recruited and has visited the home but these changes are yet to be fully embedded. The Registered Manager monitors the homes records every month and completes a quarterly report based on these findings, which is sent to Ofsted. The format of this report does not cover all of the areas required and the Registered Manager is currently revising this. The impact is reduced by the use of other processes including the homes development plan. The development plan outlines specific targets for young people and includes evidence of consultation with young people.

The Registered Manager keeps up to date with new legislation and monitors the progress that young people make. The Registered Manager and deputy manager talk passionately about the difference that the home has made to the lives of young people and are committed to meeting their needs.

Staff comment positively about the support they receive from the Registered Manager. Supervisions are held regularly and are effective. One staff member said that the support was 'excellent, particularly in relation to supervision and professional development'. Individual training needs are well met and there is a training plan in place.

The homes Statement of Purpose contains lots of information that helps staff, young people and professionals to understand the services offered by the home. However, the information regarding the Responsible Individual is incorrect. In addition, the role, qualifications and supervision arrangements of the therapeutic social worker are

not totally clear.

Records are stored securely in the home and significant events are shared appropriately. Robust action is taken by managers following incidents of concern. The police, social workers and education providers all highlight effective communication and partnership working as strengths of the home. This supports young people and improves the service offered by the home.

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.