

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC386810
Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Crossway Services Limited
Registered person address	8 Black Brook Close Heapey Chorley Lancashire PR6 9AJ
Responsible individual	Pauline Ann Croft
Registered manager	Kathleen Mitchell
Date of last inspection	27/08/2014

Inspection date	21/01/2015
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Previous inspection	improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the homes last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are safe, happy and settled in the home. Young people have made significant progress in several areas of their lives, especially within education and in accepting their cultural identity. Professionals are very complimentary about the support and care given to young people by the staff team. They say that young people make exceptional progress because staff are approachable, flexible and caring. One professional said: 'The relationship that staff have made with the young person has been paramount to their excellent improvements.' Young people benefit from staff who work well with their families and relevant professionals to ensure they get the right support to meet their needs.

Staff provide personalised and well-planned care that takes into account the individual needs and wishes of the young person. The experienced and qualified staff offer structure, support and guidance to young people that values and celebrates their individual qualities and experiences. Staff listen and respond well, as young people contribute their views and ideas about the quality of care in the home. They are fully involved in decisions about their lives and plans for their future.

Safeguarding is a priority in all aspects of young people's care. There is a strong focus on behaviour management that significantly enhances positive behaviour. Staff

work hard to provide a safe environment in which young people feel safe.

The home is well managed. Staff are properly supported to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. The manager makes good use of established monitoring systems to review the quality of care provided. There is a strong commitment in the home to continuous improvement of the care that is given to young people.

Two areas for improvement has been identified within this report. This relates to staff demonstrating that they clearly understand how to react to a potential safeguarding concern and that referral documents show how an informed decision has been made for admitting a young person to the home. These shortfalls are not currently impacting on the care received by young people but has the potential to do so.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care and accommodation for one young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/08/2014	Interim	improved effectiveness
12/03/2014	Full	good
17/10/2013	Interim	not judged
19/02/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children are protected from harm This is specifically in relation to staff understanding what action to take if they are concern about a child (NMS 4)
- ensure the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet. This is specifically in relation to ensuring that an impact risk assessment is completed. (NMS 11. 2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people are central to the support and care that they receive at this home. They are consulted on every aspect of their care. They are given opportunities to be able to compromise or effectively influence decisions to improve outcomes in their lives. Young people work very well with staff to identify barriers to their success, and contribute to plans for their immediate and longer-term futures. Therefore, they receive care and support that is driven by them which recognises and meets their individual needs.

An outstanding feature of this home is the excellent progress young people are making within education. One young person has gone from very poor attendance to 100% attendance, since living at this home. A teacher said: 'This excellent improvement is totally down to the homes approach on education. They have ensured that the young person understands the importance of education. They have worked closely with us and this has brought about a whole new attitude by the young person.' In addition to this, the young person is also engaging in school life. They are on the school counsel, are a director of the school tuck shop and stay after school for additional lessons. As a result, young people's grades are continuing to improve and they take their responsibilities as a representative of the school seriously. Young people proudly display their certificates or recognition of achievement within the home.

Young people's physical and emotional health is very good. Young people have been learning about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. As a result, they have lost weight and enjoy physical activities. When placed at this home, young people could not swim. Therefore, a course of swimming lessons was provided by the home. Young people can now swim and enjoy going swimming with friends. Young people are supported to attend all routine health appointments, so their health checks are up to date and they are in good health.

Before being placed at this home, young people had a negative view of their cultural identity. They had been exposed to a lot of racial abuse which had led them to deny their heritage. The home ensured that some staffing represented the ethnicity of the young person. As a result, staff were able to encourage a positive self-image on a daily basis. In consultation with the young person's social worker life story work was undertaken. These approaches have led the young person to embrace their culture. The manager said: 'The young person recently filled out a medical questionnaire and ticked the appropriate box for ethnicity. This is a small but major step for them. Prior to this they would have ticked 'white' or left it blank.' Young people have also requested and received specific things in relation to their cultural needs, such as a specialised comb for their hair. This shows that young people are accepting and embracing their heritage.

Young people are offered a range of activities and staff discuss different events that are coming up within the local and wider community. This includes cultural, educational, leisure or fun opportunities available to them. Young people love cartoon superheroes. They have visited a 'comicon' event and display posters of superheroes throughout the home. Young people's friends are encouraged to visit, play and stay for tea at the home. Therefore, young are actively using their free time positively.

The home has worked successfully in ensuring that young people have safe contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. This includes extended family members visiting the home and taking part in activities. This ensures relationships continue to develop and strengthen. Any restrictions of contact are clearly identified. Therefore, young people and staff's safety is not compromised.

Quality of care

outstanding

Staff deliver an excellent quality of care and fulfil young people's placement plans which specifically identify young people's diverse needs. These plans are regularly revisited to take into account young people's changing needs and development. Staff make good use of formal and informal consultation opportunities to address specific aspects of the placement plan and emerging issues, which enables young people to reflect on their own behaviours and progress. Staff ensure young people's views are accurately and clearly presented in regularly reviewed plans of care. Staff get to know the young people very well, and are fully committed to enabling them to understand and overcome their difficulties, and achieve positive outcomes.

Staff have built trusting, respectful and honest relationships with young people. They know the young person well and pride themselves on giving consistent positive messages to young people. Professionals say this is the basis of the excellent progress that young people are making. One professional said: 'The structure and routine of this home has been of significant importance. Staff clearly give the same message and respond to any incidents with the same strategies. The young person is thriving because of this.' Another professional said: 'The relationships that the young person has made with staff is paramount to the progress they have made.'

Young people contribute to the development of the home by sharing their views and ideas in individual consultations. Managers and staff spend time with young people, to ensure they communicate directly about matters of importance to them such as family contact or safety concerns. In this way, most issues are resolved informally. Young people are confident that adults listen to them, and they receive feedback about any concerns they raise. Young people also have an independent worker from the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) who visits regularly. This provides young people with additional support.

Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical and

emotional well-being. Staff closely monitor young people's well-being, to ensure they are aware of and are able to respond to any emerging issues or concerns. Consequently, staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific health needs and ensure these are met on a daily basis. All staff are trained in administering medication and first aid. Robust recordings are kept of medication dispensed. As a result, young people receive their medication in line with their prescription.

Staff worked closely with the young person's school to ensure that their attendance and participation improved. They did this by having regular meetings, putting into place the same boundaries and rewarding improvement. As a consequence, young people are achieving beyond initial expectations. Staff ensure the daily routine of the home supports young people's participation in education and take an active interest in young people's education by encouraging and helping with homework. They liaise effectively on a day to day basis with the school to discuss any concerns and work collaboratively with education staff to ensure young people have the opportunity to achieve their academic potential. Staff promote the importance of education, and celebrate all achievements. In addition to this, young people said that they were being laughed at in school for being in care. Discussions with the young person and teachers brought about a member of staff doing a power point presentation to the school. The teacher said: 'This was well executed. Pupils asked lots of questions. It also showed them that young people in care live in similar homes to them. I believe that this has also helped them settle.' As a result, friends from school have visited the home.

Staff support and encourage young people to engage in a wide range of activities, both educationally and for pleasure. This enables young people to benefit and experience different activities and promotes community awareness. Young people live in a quiet neighbourhood, close to local amenities and with good public transport links. They take ownership of the home and treat it with respect and care. Young people have personalised the home to reflect their interests and likes. For example; personalising their bedrooms, displaying their posters and photographs of them around the home.

The home is decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard. Young people live in a healthy environment that actively supports their physical and emotional health.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people receive high levels of support and supervision in order to maintain their overall safety. They live in a safe environment where staff do their utmost to protect them from harm. Staff receive regular training on how to safeguard and promote young people's welfare. The significant majority of staff fully demonstrated what actions they would take in response to allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm to keep young people safe. Staff use their knowledge and understanding of how to

protect young people from abuse or exploitation, and when necessary foster good links with other child protection professionals. When staff are concerned about young people's safety they take decisive action to make sure young people are protected and receive the support they need. However in one instance a member of staff was unable to clearly demonstrate their understanding around safeguarding if they were faced with a potential concern when on duty. This does not fully ensure that appropriate action would be taken.

Staff communicate in a timely manner with all relevant parties about emerging risks for young people. They provide young people with good advice, guidance and support. By having access to independent advocates external to the home, young people's rights are fully promoted. As a result, young people grow in confidence, understand the consequences of risk-taking behaviour and have increasing skills in staying safe.

Positive ways of managing the behaviour of young people are utilised effectively. When first placed, incentive schemes are instrumental in encouraging improved behaviour, especially within education. However, young people themselves have recognised that they should not be rewarded for going to school. They prefer to be reward spontaneously when they have achieved something. Good behaviour within the home is enhanced through the quality of the relationships between young people and staff. Consequences for misbehaviour are appropriate and recorded in sufficient detail, with evaluation of how effective they are. Young people have the opportunity to comment within the record so their view about the fairness of the sanction is noted.

Young people have not been restrained at this setting. Care staff are trained in methods of care and control and demonstrate that restraint would only ever be used as a last resort. In addition to this, young people have not been reported missing from this home. The home has the local missing from home protocol in place and individual risk assessments identify actions staff should take and these are well known. Staff demonstrated that they fully understood the home's procedure and that the welfare of the young person would be their priority.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. A good range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and preventive checks, are implemented, and this protects young people well. Staff carry out regular fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. The provider follows a robust recruitment and selection process ensuring that staff working with young people are suitable.

Leadership and management

good

The experienced and highly competent Registered Manager has been in post since 2006. She is qualified to level 3 and 4, as well as holding the Registered Manager award. She is also the Registered Manager for another home within the organisation but divides her time well between the two homes. There are clear arrangements for cover in her absence.

Staff are well supported through regular supervision and describe the manager as fair and approachable. The manager has high expectations of the staff team and is proactive in ensuring all staff receive a full training programme to equip them with specific skills relevant to the young people accommodated. They also receive additional training linked to young people's individual needs. Most of the staff are qualified in the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in care. One member of staff is completing an equivalent qualification. This ensures that staff have the skills to support young people and that they are cared for by a suitably qualified staff team.

The manager and staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to providing good quality childcare practice tailored to address the individual needs of each looked after young person. This encourages young people to make significant progress across many aspects of their lives. Therefore, young people live in a home that places their needs central to service development, and celebrates the progress they make. Enthusiastic and competent staff have consistently high aspirations for young people, enjoy their company, and are proud of how well young people are doing. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the positive progress young people are making.

The provider and manager regularly monitor the operation of the home through quality assurance systems. They capture the quality of care given and highlight any improvements needed. As a result, the manager demonstrated a good awareness of the development needs of the service and there is strong drive to improve care practices throughout.

Young people's records contain up-to-date information about them, including the relevant documents provided by or requested from placing authorities such as the reporting of significant events. The home's written records are securely stored; data is well protected and provides a good picture of individual young people's needs. But the referral of the young person was completed over the telephone. As a consequence, there is no formal documentation that shows that the home could meet the young person's needs. This does not ensure that a robust admission process was followed.

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.