

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC389174
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Embrace New Horizon Centre Limited
Registered provider address	2 Parklands Business Park, Rednal, Birmingham B45 9PZ

Responsible individual	Amanda Morgan-Taylor
Registered manager	Anna Satterthwaite
Inspector	Rosie Dancer

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of young people and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC389174

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The compatibility of young people attending together for a short break or living in the home on a longer-term basis is carefully considered. This means that that young people are able to make the best out of their time in the home.
- A main strength of the care is the excellent relationships that young people develop with staff whom they like and trust.
- Staff are highly nurturing towards young people and understand their needs well.
- Young people communicate with staff, in whatever way they are able, and staff are responsive to them.
- Consistent routines and boundaries set provide young people with the predictability that they need to deal with life on a day-to-day basis.
- Young people take part in a good range of activities that reflect their individual preferences. Young people are also successfully encouraged to try new activities that help them to develop new skills.
- All young people make good progress from their starting points. They make improvements in their education, health and emotional well-being.
- The manager and her staff are highly motivated and committed to the young people they work with. They are child centred and work hard to support each child to achieve the best out of their life.
- Staff work exceptionally well together. They pre-empt young people's behaviours well and are proactive in defusing situations.
- There is excellent partnership working with other professionals and agencies and a clear ethos that the work of the staff forms part of the team around the child.
- The manager and her staff work highly effectively with parents. They provide parents with high-quality support and are highly sensitive to their needs.

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) meet(s) 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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard 7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who (2)(v) help each child to understand how the child's privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited.	07/04/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every six months. (Regulation 45(1))	07/04/2017
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1))	07/04/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. This is with specific reference to ensuring that all people employed to work in the home have or are studying for a level 3 qualification and that all staff are provided with update training in a timely way. (Regulation 33(3)(a))	07/04/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard young people and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to

the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

- The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. This is with specific reference to challenging local authorities that have not developed a transition plan for a child in a timely way or have not provided the home with copies of the paperwork for children looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, para 2.3)
- A deprivation of liberty may occur when a child is both under continuous supervision and control and is not free to leave the home. A children's home cannot routinely deprive a child of their liberty without a court order, such as a section 25 order to place a child in a licensed secure children's home, or, in the case of young people aged over 16 who lack mental capacity, a deprivation of liberty may be authorised by the Court of Protection following an application under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.63) Therefore, the registered provider must consider whether an order is required for any person over 16 who is attending the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children who have learning and/or physical difficulties, on a short-break or bridging placement. It is privately owned by a large organisation. It is one of three homes in the nearby locality owned by the same company.

This organisation is making changes to the purpose of the home. This is as a result of a change in the needs of local authorities and the needs of current young people using the service. It has applied to Ofsted to provide three beds for young people on a short-break basis and four beds for longer-term placements. It is, therefore, in a period of transition.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/01/2016	Full	Outstanding
19/10/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of young people and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people commencing short-break stays or going to live in the home on a longer-term basis are welcomed sensitively and with careful and considered planning. There is good attention to considering referrals and planning for short breaks to ensure that young people's needs are compatible. Young people have excellent relationships with the adults who care for them, and staff spend good-quality time with each young person. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge about young people's vulnerabilities and needs and are highly skilled in communicating with young people whatever their communication needs. For example, pictorial aids are used, and staff are adept at reading young people's non-verbal cues and verbal prompts. It is clear that young people, on whatever basis they are staying in the home, feel that they belong in the home and are valued for who they are. A parent said that her child who attends on a short-break basis, calls staff 'my [name of the home] family'. Young people have predictable routines that they are helped to understand by whatever communication means they use. This helps young people to feel safe and provides them with a secure base from which they can grow and develop. Young people increase in confidence and develop in many areas of their lives. For example, they develop the ability to empathise with and nurture others through to gaining the confidence to go out with staff into the community for a walk or shopping. Every achievement, however small, is celebrated and this spurs young people on to try further new and interesting things. A parent said that her child 'wouldn't be in such a good place at the moment without the work of the staff'. Overall, there is good attention to promoting the privacy and dignity of young people, whatever their needs. However, one bathroom and one bedroom had no window covering. A blind was put up in the bathroom during the inspection. The young person occupying the bedroom, due to his sensory needs, does not allow a curtain or blind on the window. Further consideration is needed as to how his privacy can be assured when he is in his room. Young people enjoy nutritious meals. There is good attention paid to any allergies or food intolerances that young people have; any specific support that they need due to their physical health needs is provided. Mealtimes are enjoyable, social occasions, and young people sit with staff and each other and happily chat to staff. Young people make choices, in line with their daily schedules, about a range of issues, for example activities. Staff are skilled at drawing young people away from their obsessive behaviours. Staff get young people involved in alternative learning	

opportunities that help them to develop new skills and interests. During the inspection, young people were gainfully occupied. For example, a young person decided that she would like to go out in the evening for dinner, and this was arranged. Other young people were happily playing on the computer or playing with staff, and one was taken out to the railway station to satisfy his love of watching trains.

Some young people have developed friendships with each other. These friendships are encouraged, and young people are taken out together to take part in an activity which they enjoy.

Young people's attendance at school is well supported, especially that of those who struggle with transitions. Careful consideration is given to developing and implementing strategies to support young people to leave for school and, over time, they are more able to transition smoothly. Young people's education prospects improve as a direct result of the support that they are provided with. An education professional said of a young person who attends his school, 'He has developed his coordination, concentration and communication skills as a direct result of the work staff have carried out, and this is having a positive impact on his learning.' Another education professional said, 'Staff are very supportive of young people's education. They attend all meetings [and] take on board educational targets set for each child, and it is the best children's home we work with.' In so far as each young person has the ability, they learn the skills that help them to become more independent. For example, they learn self-care skills and do small tasks, such as clearing the table.

Young people who stay in the home on a long-term basis receive specialist help in a timely way, when required, such as support from the child and adolescent mental health service or from hospital consultants. The staff work well with health professionals to support young people who find attendance for medical appointments difficult. Overall, the arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are safe. A social worker highlighted that staff 'address concerns when needed, such as recently querying [the] correct level of medication and requesting [a] clinic letter be sent for their information.' However, for one child who has an emergency protocol for the administration of buccal midazolam, not all of the relevant documents had the dosage stated.

Parents are welcomed into the home to see their children. Work with parents is of an exceptionally high quality. Staff are accessible to parents and keep them fully informed about how their children are. One parent said, 'They have changed my life. I know he is absolutely fine there, and the time gives me some time to myself.' Another parent described how they are treated with sensitivity and respect and how they have been supported through a difficult period. A social worker said that the parent of a child they work with had said, 'We [the parents] have an excellent relationship with staff, particularly the house manager.'

	Judgement grade
How well young people and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people feel at ease with and trust staff and communicate any worries to them. Staff are responsive and reassure young people. Risk assessments are understood by staff who use the strategies developed to keep young people safe and to ensure that their well-being is promoted. The risks of young people going missing are limited due to the high supervision levels. Staff are fully aware of the young people's vulnerabilities and use strategies that minimise the risks. However, while the practice and policy are that, should a child go missing, they are to be reported to the police immediately, for one child the protocol was at odds with this and stated that staff should call police after five minutes of his being out of sight. This has the potential to cause confusion for staff who may be new to working with the young person. Staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection. They demonstrate that they have a good understanding about how to report concerns and allegations. They understand the local authority designated officer's role and are aware of how to use the company's whistleblowing policy. There have been no safeguarding matters since the last inspection. The designated officer for safeguarding reports a good working relationship with the manager and said that the manager follows up matters effectively. There are very low levels of incidents that are notifiable and, when one occurs, all relevant agencies and people are notified and appropriate action is taken to ensure that young people are safeguarded. Boundaries are appropriate to meet each young person's need and applied consistently. Staff work in line with behaviour management plans to support young people to develop appropriate coping strategies. For some young people, the frequency of incidents has reduced as a result of this work. Generally, staff are able to defuse incidents before they escalate so the need to use sanctions or restraints is limited. When physical intervention is needed, this is usually low level and involves guiding a child away from the source of his or her distress. Young people have use of a computer and are closely supervised by staff while they are on the internet, so that risks to them are minimal. Staff have worked with young people who have the capacity to understand how to keep safe when using the internet. There have been no specific issues in respect of bullying. This is in part due to the young people's lack of understanding of bullying as a concept. Young people are closely supervised, so any disagreements are addressed immediately, and young	

people are kept safe from the actions of another young person.

The environment is well maintained and resourced and, overall, a safe and welcoming place for young people to stay. There have been significant changes to the premises, so that they are suitable to cater for short-break and longer-term placements, and final preparations are being made to the environment in respect of this.

Staff are employed only after undergoing a vigorous recruitment process to ensure that they are suitable people to work with the young people. A minor shortfall was found in the recruitment records, in that the manager does not always record the results of her discussions with people who have provided references for the applicant.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	
The manager has been registered since 2013. She is suitably experienced and qualified to a level 5 standard. She is very passionate in her work and held in high regard by staff and other professionals. Over the past few months, she has been managing the running of the home and overseeing the significant alterations to the premises. Some areas of management tasks have slipped since the last inspection as a result. This has not impacted significantly on the quality of care or safety of the young people. However, there is the potential for this to occur if the quality and breadth of monitoring are not improved. The areas of monitoring that have slipped include the following: ■ There are gaps in the paperwork for the administration of emergency medication to one young person. ■ Children looked after paperwork has not been obtained successfully from all local authorities. ■ There has been a failure of all staff to sign to say that they have read young people's plans or that they have read the team meeting minutes. ■ There has been a lack of evaluation of the views of children that have been provided via surveys. ■ There has been no evaluation of the accidents to see whether action needs to be taken to reduce specific recurring issues.	

- A six-monthly report has not been provided to Ofsted, in order that the regulator can have a full overview of any issues arising between inspections.

An independent visitor visits the home on a monthly basis, and he has noted a number of the issues found during this inspection and provides a view about the overall safety of the young people and the quality of care.

There has been a lack of challenge to local authorities that have not planned effectively for young people to move on into adult services when they turn 18 years old. Consequently, there are a small number of young adults using the service. While these young adults receive a good quality of care, it is important that they are moved on to services that suit their ages and needs more appropriately.

The environment is safe and secure, and young people are unable to leave the premises without staff for their safety. There are permissions from either their parents or their social workers for these restrictions. However, it has not been considered, on a case-by-case basis, whether young people who are over the age of 16 years should be subject to a deprivation of liberty order authorised by the Court of Protection.

The home has developed a statement of purpose to cover its new planned purpose to provide a mix of short-break and long-term placements. Overall, it is clearly written but requires some minor additions to meet schedule 1. For example, information is needed about how admissions are carried out for planned placements and details about how the child protection and behaviour management policies can be accessed by relevant parties.

There are highly effective working relationships with placing agencies, other agencies, professionals and parents, which ensure that care is well coordinated and that young people make good progress. A parent said, 'We would definitely recommend them; communication is good and [there is] real team working with us.'

The manager and staff were able to demonstrate the impact that living or staying in the home has had on young people, and they understand and build on the progress that each child makes. Staff keep young people at the centre of their practice, whatever their needs, despite some extreme and complex behaviours.

The home is sufficiently staffed, although there are a number of new staff. The team is developing well, and its enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment to the young people is impressive. A parent called the staff 'amazing'. Staff are astute in recognising subtle cues that young people show and they use these to act and defuse situations.

Induction, training and development activities provided are effective, and staff were able to relate how they have used the training in their work with the young people. Since the last inspection, the home has been awarded an autism accredited kite mark, demonstrating the high commitment to providing a high quality of care to young people who are on the autistic spectrum. However, due to changes in personnel, there are now low levels of staff who hold a level 3 qualification.

Furthermore, waking night staff are not offered the opportunity to undertake this qualification. Areas of training for some staff require updating. All staff have undergone safeguarding training. However, this training does not include the recognition and reporting of suspected or potential incidents of female genital mutilation. As the home is moving into caring for young people on a longer-term basis, the training plan should cover the new responsibilities, such as supervising contact with family members.

Staff have regular and effective supervision that supports their practice and professional development. Team meetings also provide for effective support and are used as an arena to discuss individual young people and their needs and goals.

Internal care plans are of a good quality. Young people's needs and wishes are identified and, where relevant to the young person's needs, autism profiles are developed. The staff and manager take part in reviews and (with the exception of moving on plans for some young people) influence decisions appropriately. An education professional said that staff always promote young people's education through their attendance at meetings and their subsequent work, ensuring that education targets are met. A social worker stated, 'They [staff] attend child in need reviews and looked after children reviews even when they are held at some distance away.'

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 or young people being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after 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 that 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 whom 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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