

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389698
Inspector	Natalie Burton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Oracle Care Limited
Registered person address	Unit 1 Dane Valley Mill Havannah Street CONGLETON Cheshire CW12 2AH
Responsible individual	Steven Bromley
Registered manager	Gary William Massey
Date of last inspection	12/09/2013

Inspection date	14/11/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
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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This is a good service that provides positive outcomes for young people. Young people are engaged in education and attendance and achievement is encouraged and supported by staff. The key strengths lie within the integrated education, clinical and care staff working relationship within the organisation, who deliver a good quality of care. They are motivated and fully understand the needs of the young people.

Young people are able to make meaningful contributions to the running of the home because their views and opinions are valued. One young person described the home as 'a little bit breath-taking'. Staff provide support to young people that results in them understanding the principles of leading healthy lifestyles, attending education and becoming more involved in the local community.

The effectiveness with which the home provides personalised, well planned care is a result of streamlined systems and quality placement planning. Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of the young people's care and the service in general. However, there are some shortfalls in training, measures of control and referral of allegations about staff to the local authority designated officer in an appropriate timescale.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; it is operated in line with a clear therapeutic model. The organisation also provides a registered school around which its homes in this area are based.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2013	Full	adequate
24/07/2013	Full	inadequate
19/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
29/11/2012	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
26 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by home receive training, with particular regard to specific refresher training in autism awareness and self harm. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	16/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children (NMS 3.8)
- ensure allegations against people that work with children are reported by the designated person to the local authority designated person in line with the organisations safeguarding policy. In particular with regard to agreed timescales. (NMS 20.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in many areas of their lives. Through their participation in activities and individual therapeutic sessions, young people develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and their self-esteem improves. Young people's confidence in their skills and abilities is growing because they receive encouragement and praise for all their progress. Young people are proud of their achievements and these are celebrated by using photographs, and through discussions with young people, staff and other important people in their lives.

Young people are consistently stimulated at this setting. Their self-esteem is increased because they are celebrated as individuals, supported, encouraged and praised throughout their day. Young people are fully able to participate in a wide range of activities and staff are focused in enabling them to be able to experience the same activities as their peers. For example, young people partake in fishing, squash, badminton, and ice skating. In addition some young people have been on a barge trip, and played in a piano concert.

Young people access health services to promote their physical and emotional health and well-being. They engage with professionals, such as the organisations therapist, dentist and doctors, supported by staff in the home who have the expertise to help them manage their health needs. This has resulted in young people accessing their required health appointments.

Young people make good progress in attending their education provision and their daily routines have improved. Integrated working relationships within the organisation ensure there are good communication systems in place and this keeps all agencies updated on young people's attendance and engagement in their education. Plans set achievable targets and challenges, they support young people's learning processes and enable young people to aspire to reach their potential. Young people's attendance and achievement significantly improves.

Young people maintain and develop positive contact with those who are significant to them and regularly have phone calls with friends and family. Staff communicate well with social workers and parents ensuring contact arrangements are regularly reviewed. Visits by young people with family members are well managed and supported by staff.

Young people safely increase their levels of independent time and engagement in pro-social activities and reduction in levels of supervision and monitoring. This is because their social and community access risk assessment is reviewed by the multi-disciplinary team within the organisation and shared with the young person. Young people make progress in learning skills such as how to use a washing machine, hang

out clothes to dry, and preparing their own snacks. These are skills that can carry into adulthood and which provide them with an increased level of independence.

Quality of care

good

Young people are cared for by motivated, enthusiastic and supportive staff. Staff have strong aspirations for all young people and ensure that care and support is delivered to a high standard. Young people are cared for and develop confidence in a nurturing and stable environment. As such, they benefit from long term relationships and attachments to key people. A young person described the home as 'spot-on', and 'nothing they can do better'. In addition a social worker reported that the home 'works closely with us and keeps us well informed'.

Young people feel listened to by staff. This is because staff actively seek young people's views through young people's weekly meetings, key work sessions and daily on-going conversations. Staff capture any moments possible to broaden young people's horizons on areas such as current affairs, and teaching them about different countries and cultures. Effective relationships built between staff and young people enable staff to have an in depth understanding of the young people's needs.

Young people's physical and emotional health is promoted and monitored. Professional practice and therapeutic input is consistently child centred and personalised. Staff, education and clinical professionals identify and analyse each young person's needs and continually review the value of their input and strategies, thereby ensuring all care is effective and current. All young people have an allocated therapist, who they meet with at least weekly. In addition, therapists meet monthly with the staff and management, forming close working relationships ensuring that all professionals involved are working to the same goal and the young person is aware. This keeps young person safe. Young people are actively encouraged to attend appointments with their doctors and dentist. Staff are qualified in first aid. Healthy eating is promoted; menus are balanced and take into account personal preferences.

Staff are efficient in encouraging young people to attend their educational provision. All young people currently attend the organisations' own school provision. Staff support young people in their education, through attending and supporting them at the school, supporting them in their learning and enabling them to resume full time education. This close working integrated relationship with clinical and educational staff is a key strength of the home, and ensures that young people's needs are strongly understood enabling staff to respond to their needs.

Young people's detailed and comprehensive placement planning reflects that young people are treated as individuals. Their individual needs are recognised and understood by the staff and placement objectives are clearly stated and achievable.

Staff are well guided and implement positive handling plans to support young people to modify their behaviours. The agreed strategies to care and support young people are clear and accountable, and young people are supported positively to reduce incidences of challenging behaviour.

The arrangements for introducing young people to the home are effective. Careful attention is paid to ensuring that staff get to know the young person and the young person gets to know the staff. The young person visits the home and staff actively gain all required information before an informed decision is made to ensure that the service can meet the needs of the young person. In addition, the organisation is robust at matching young people living together and therefore identifying and reducing any potential risks before the placement is agreed. This makes sure that young people are aware of who will be caring for them and the expectations of the home before their admission.

Young people have not made any formal complaints. Although any concerns raised by young people have been dealt with at the informal stage, the manager still records them. This shows that concerns raised by young people are responded to seriously and details the action taken to address the issues, no matter how small.

Young people live in a pleasant family home. The accommodation provides good space for group and individual activities, and is well maintained and decorated to provide a welcoming and homely environment. Young people have their own bedrooms, which they can personalise to their own taste.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe in the home and feel safe. This service has a good impact on the safety of young people because safeguarding strategies focus on extensive and thorough risk assessment. Staff take their responsibility seriously for keeping young people safe, there are effective arrangements to safeguard young people and young people are safe. This is because the staff promote a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals.

Safeguarding arrangements are good, staff are trained and are clear about their responsibilities for whistle blowing and reporting concerns. They understand the need for effective links with the local safeguarding team and there is good knowledge about how the protection and welfare of young people is managed should concerns arise. When, on occasion concerns regarding staff practice have been raised, the organisation has taken appropriate action to safeguard children. For example, staff were suspended. However, there was a delay in reporting the concerns to the local authority designated officer. While this is not in line with the organisations' safeguarding policy, there was minimal impact on young people due to the action taken by the organisation.

Young people do not go missing. This is because the attention to the supervision of young people is detailed and consistent. Staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all young people are supervised, kept safe and receive appropriate support. Risk assessments are in place and there are subsequent restrictions on young people having free time. Strategies to manage behaviours and safeguard young people focus on safety but also ensure all young people have opportunities to reach their potential and achieve. Care planning, risk management and behaviour management plans are in place, there provide clarity about how the staff are to support young people and fully reflect the positive staff practice.

Positive behaviour is encouraged through incentives, rewards charts and key work sessions. Staff appropriately intervene when young people cannot be diverted from escalating behaviour, they respond positively and remain calm through challenges. Measures of control are clearly recorded and show young people are consulted, however, on occasion, sanctions have been given because young people have not done what staff have asked them to do, rather than as an effective measure to help address inappropriate behaviour. For example, refusing to complete a chore. This does not ensure that all measures of control are fair and reasonable.

Safe recruitment procedures are in place to safeguard young people. Settings that ensure employees are appropriately vetted show commitment to the safety of young people. Personnel records are maintained to a good standard.

The overall physical safety of the home is maintained by the review of any potential dangers through generic and specific risk assessments that cover all aspects of daily living. Good health and safety checks and maintenance arrangements ensure that young people live in a home that is physically safe and is kept safe. Young people are further protected by evacuation drills which ensure staff and young people know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2013, has over fourteen years experience of working with children and young people, and has completed the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care.

The home is managed effectively by a committed manager; with support from an enthusiastic staff team. Well organised multi-disciplinary meetings with professionals from within the organisation, such as monthly risk matrix meetings and management meetings, further drive improvement for young people. The service is aware of its strengths and weakness and has a clear development plan; such as, to increase access to activities which develop young people's learning about the world. This helps to continually improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people.

Staffing levels are good and provide young people with sufficient competent adults to

care for them. The staff team is diverse; people have a range of life experience and qualifications and staff have a good level of support and supervision. They receive regular supervision that challenges their practice, and is productive and supportive. In addition regular staff meetings provide a forum for staff to share best practice and develop strategies to meet the needs of the young people. Young people benefit from high staffing levels and the care and attention they receive from the well supported staff team. Staff complete all mandatory training, in areas such as first aid, safeguarding and fire safety. However, not all staff have received specific training; such as autism awareness and self-harm. This does not ensure that all staff can fully meet all the identified needs of the young people.

The two recommendations made following the last inspection have been met. Recruitment and selection personnel have received training and this helps in robust recruitment of staff that will enhance the existing staff team. Young people are now promoted to take appropriate risks through independence. This is because management regularly review the social and community access risk assessment, looking to safely increase young people's independence within the community.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose, and these are understood by staff, young people and interested parties. A social worker reported 'the organisation is very professional and really adhere to their values and principles'. The manager conducts regular monthly monitoring and external monthly visits are completed. The organisation has recruited a new external visitor, and these reports provide the Registered Manager with a robust overview of the home and clearly identify progress and improvement to the home. In addition, the organisation have implemented a new format to internal monitoring that is more robust and detailed in the action taken and further action needed. Through this monitoring the service is continually improving the quality of care for young people.

Young people's records are organised well and contribute to an understanding of their lives and experiences. Staff are encouraged to reflect on the quality of care they provide and to evaluate future interventions. Information relating to significant events affecting young people's safety is notified to relevant agencies, this includes Ofsted and the safeguarding teams from the local and home authority. This ensures concerns about young people's safety are shared by the home to protect young people.

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.