

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 March 2016
Unique reference number	SC390156
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pilgrims Corner Limited
Registered person address	Suite 5, The Links, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7GQ

Responsible individual	Sarah Norman
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Mark Blesky

Inspection date	21 March 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	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	Good

SC390156

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- There is strong leadership and management, which is aspirational and child-focused, resulting in a consistently stable and harmonious home.
- Good management of risk keeps young people safe, helps them to understand harm and learn to avoid risk-taking behaviour.
- Staff are warm and sensitive, engaging young people to develop and sustain positive relationships with staff and one another.
- Young people develop self-awareness, and increase their self-esteem, which enables them to manage greater levels of responsibility. This increases their self-confidence enabling them to form rewarding peer friendships and sustain memberships within the wider community.
- Young people's education is well supported by staff, who are strong advocates for their learning. Young people have high attendance rates at school and work hard towards improving their achievements.
- Young people's behaviour has remained consistently positive over a significant period. They develop plans with staff that help them manage their behaviour. These are effective and successful because young people are at the heart of the planning and instrumental in decision-making.
- Recruitment of staff, interviewing and assessment are typically well managed. However, the home does not carry out thorough verification where applicants have previously worked with young people or vulnerable adults.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Verify so far as reasonably practicable the reason why the employment or position ended for a person who has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults (Schedule (2) Regulations (26)(28)(3)).	30/05/2016
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Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to accommodate two young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a small local provider who has other similar homes in the vicinity. This provider also has a school, which young people may attend.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/12/2014	Full	Good
06/03/2014	Interim	Inadequate progress
22/11/2013	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people form and sustain good relationships with staff, they trust the staff and know that they are there to help them. Staff members understand the importance of giving young people positive consistent messages, showing respect, and valuing their views and opinions. Young people express themselves openly and with confidence, because staff encourage them to have their say and share their opinions. This, they know, shapes their care and the manner in which the home is run. Young people use formal occasions, such as young people's meetings, and day-to-day interactions with the staff to express their views. One young person said, 'I know my opinions are important, because staff listen to me and want to hear what I have to say.' Another young person commented, 'we can ask staff anything, they always listen to us and what we say makes a difference.' Young people's comments have resulted in changes to the home's decoration, meals and activities, and the purchase and use of mobile phones. Young people feel trusted, they learn to share their views maturely, and how to build and maintain positive relationships with those around them. Young people increase their self-confidence and self-esteem through positive experiences, taking increased responsibility for themselves. This has enabled them to have the confidence to join clubs such as army cadets and sports clubs, where they have excelled. Staff have high aspirations for the young people's education. They actively promote their learning and support them, both within the home and by providing advocacy with their schools. Daily contact is maintained with one school and weekly contact with the other, providing very high levels of consultation. This has enabled staff to support and intervene promptly, ensuring that any disruption is kept to a minimum and quickly resolved. There is a high level of staff commitment towards education, which has driven very good results. Both young people have 100% attendance and have achieved beyond expectations. Staff have helped the young people to understand the importance of their studies, with one young person attending after-school	

academic clubs each night of the week. Another is demonstrating motivation and commitment in their studies, when previously this was not evident.

The home accommodates young people from contrasting backgrounds. Effective placement planning ensures that young people are only placed in the home if the staff have the skills, experience and understanding to support them. Young people's culture and diversity are valued and they are encouraged to express this throughout their time at the home. Festivals, celebratory meals and traditions are respected, and staff encourage young people to learn about cultures different from their own.

Young people's health is well maintained, and all young people are promptly registered with core health services. These are attended throughout their time in the home in accordance with their health care plans. When young people receive more specialist treatment and interventions dedicated staff members are chosen to support them throughout their treatment. Young people understand the importance of diet and exercise, and choose healthy lifestyles. This is because staff spend time with them, educating them to avoid habits and behaviours that are detrimental to their well-being. As a result, young people have adopted healthy lifestyles, changed their habits and taken greater responsibility by making informed choices.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
There are very few incidents when young people place themselves at risk through their behaviour. Staff understand each young person's level of vulnerability through comprehensive assessment and risk management. When young people have a history of risk-taking behaviour, effective planning and regular review minimises and significantly reduces these risks. Because some young people may be at greater risk from the environment and location, a detailed area risk assessment identifies crime trends and areas where risk is higher. Staff work proactively with other agencies, which include the police and local authorities, and liaison is fluid and frequent. This helps to shape the home's awareness of community risks and informs risk management planning. Effective risk management keeps young people safe and it allows them to take appropriate levels of responsibility for themselves. It increases their confidence, and aids the development of their own sense of safety and understanding of	

danger. This careful planning and attention to detail has resulted in young people both becoming more engaged in the wider community and effectively maintaining their safety.

Young people typically do not run away or go missing from this home. The last event was approximately a year ago. A young person spoken to said, 'I would never run away, what would be the point, I love it here.' Another young person commented, 'staff trust me and I have built this trust up, I don't need to run away.' Despite the rare incidence of running away, staff training, team meetings and supervision are used effectively to consider dangers to young people such as child sexual exploitation, going missing and risk-taking behaviour. This keeps staff vigilant to the signs and symptoms of risk, and well informed to enable them to engage with young people in meaningful discussions.

Behaviour management is effective and there are few incidents of significant concern. Young people are supported through behaviour management plans, which they have discussed and agreed with staff. Strategies and techniques to be used are agreed when specific behaviours arise, these are highly effective in helping young people regain control. As a result, notifications of significant incidents are rare, with the last notification being made almost a year ago.

Physical intervention is not routinely used, and only in accordance with the regulations and guidance. The last physical intervention took place over 18 months ago, with a young person no longer resident at the home. Staff understand the implications of taking physical control, and successfully use effective de-escalation and non-restrictive practices in behaviour management.

The process of staff recruitment, interviewing and assessment is typically well managed in almost all areas. Staff members are interviewed by an established panel, and their skills and knowledge are tested through skilful interviewing techniques. However, whilst statutory checks and references are taken up, the verification of staff members who have previously worked with young people is not thorough. This could result in staff members who may have demonstrated unsuitability in previous roles being offered employment at the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The previous manager left the home's employment at the end of December 2015,	

and an interim manager was appointed. An application was made to Ofsted for this individual to be registered. However, their probation period was not completed and they left this interim role in late February 2016.

Urgent action has been undertaken by the responsible individual to recruit to the manager post, and two applicants are completing their second round of interviews at the time of this inspection. In the interim, the responsible individual has stepped into this post. The responsible individual was previously a frequent visitor to the home, and engaged with the young people and staff daily. Therefore, these interim management arrangements have not been overly disruptive. One staff member mentioned, 'I'm really pleased that the responsible individual is in the home so frequently, it's nice to work together as a team.' The responsible individual is highly thought of by the staff and young people. They identify her as someone they can trust, and she has high aspirations for the home.

Revision and some updating of supervision systems, staff appraisal and training programmes have been put into place by the responsible individual. The home's development plan has been updated. This has placed greater emphasis on staff development and the quality assurance of staff training.

The independent quality assurance visits and the interim manager's own monitoring of the home has been an effective tool in overseeing and the driving of improvement. As a result, closer links with quality assurance assessments are being made through the review of the home's development plan. For instance, areas for development identified in these assessments are directly triggering changes to supervision and team meetings. This has resulted in a stronger focus in supervision on evaluating professional development, and the impact of training on this. It has also resulted in team meetings being themed and more structured, thereby directly addressing the improvement agenda.

The home is well maintained and furnished throughout and young people confirm that they are consulted over the decoration of all communal areas and their bedrooms.

The responsible individual has arranged for her own supervision to be carried out by an external qualified social worker, providing her with a more independent view of her performance. She understands the importance of supervision and uses it to reflect on her management objectively.

Placement plans are clear and concise, demonstrating tangible links between the placing authority's care plans, and the support and care provided by the home.

Plans demonstrate how young people's individuality and diversity are considered.

In one example, significant focus has been given to building self-confidence and self-esteem, resulting in the young person flourishing. A social worker commented, 'the young person is settled, happy and achieving beyond expectation, I am so pleased with the placement.' Another young person has received excellent individual support from a chosen dedicated staff member throughout specialised therapeutic interventions. Well managed planning further demonstrates the importance that the home places on the support and their commitment to young people.

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 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 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards'.

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