

SC392549

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The registered manager provides outstanding leadership. She is child-centred and puts the needs of the children and young people first at all times. She leads the team well and continues to develop the home and the care practice. She is well supported by other managers in the organisation and the responsible person.

- The children and young people are kept safe. There have been very few safeguarding issues. When they do occur, they are quickly and effectively dealt with.
- The staff ensure that the children and young people are nurtured and cared for extremely well. The home is a very settled and relaxed place to live.
- The staff are working with a psychologist to provide a more in-depth and individual service for each child and young person. Their needs are carefully assessed and then good-quality planning ensures that appropriate action is taken to meet these needs.
- All of the children and young people are doing particularly well with their education at present. They have full attendance and are making excellent progress in their school work or their chosen college courses.
- The children and young people are supported both to maintain and improve contact with their families where appropriate and to understand their family issues.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/08/2016	Full	Good
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/06/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is very settled. The children and young people living at the home have all been there for some time and plans for all of them are to stay for the longer term. The home is cosy and has a family feel. The children and young people are given nurturing care in a relaxed and comfortable environment.

The children and young people all have very good relationships with the staff. They are provided with a very personalised and individual package of work which meets their needs well and they are engaged with this. Consequently, they are all making good progress and in some areas of their lives, they are making exceptional progress.

Interaction between the staff and the children and young people is relaxed and positive. During the inspection one child returned from school enthusiastic about their day and chatted excitedly to staff about their plans for the evening. They then rushed off to their bedroom to collect a recently gained judo medal which they proudly showed to the inspector.

The photographs on the wall show the children and young people enjoying a wide range of leisure activities but pride of place, on the lounge mantelpiece, are pictures of school graduations and first day at school photos.

All of the children and young people at the home are doing well with their education. One child has made the move from a specialist primary school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties to a mainstream secondary school. This is an exceptional achievement for this child and is a consequence of the effective support they have received from staff. Two other young people are attending college full time and are making significant progress with their chosen courses. This means that they will have genuine career options at the end of their courses.

The staff support the health of the children and young people well. Medical appointments are made and kept. Healthy lifestyles are talked about and action is taken. Most of the children and young people take an active part in community-based leisure and sporting activities and healthy eating is actively promoted. All of the children and young people have had time with specialist workers to support them with their emotional difficulties. For some, this has been of significant benefit in terms of them dealing with both past and present issues and helping with their emotional well-being. One young person has particularly benefited from time spent with a relationship counsellor.

All of the children and young people are supported to keep in touch with their families and several of them have significantly improved relationships with them.

The staff go to great lengths to encourage the children and young people to be part of running the home. Mealtimes are important and are taken together wherever possible. The kitchen is the hub of the house. Themed evening meals are accompanied by interesting fact sheets. There is also an ongoing photo competition and other interesting

posters and information. The children and young people help with household chores and the home operates like a family house. There are formal house meetings which are constructive and interesting and the children and young people are also consulted on all other issues pertaining to their lives.

One social worker spoken to was very complimentary about the home and the staff and described both the home and the progress their placed child was making as 'excellent'.

The children and young people at the home are encouraged and supported to gain the skills necessary for independent living and adult life. The staff have devised a system of recording progress which is effective. Of the two older young people in the home, one is making very good progress in this area and the other is making progress at a slower, steadier rate. Planning for these young people is well under way and it is clear that they are very much a part of deciding their own futures. Progress is clear. One young person has now started travelling independently to college and to leisure activities as well as returning for visits to their family. At the time of the inspection the young people were actively budgeting, shopping for and cooking their own meals in a planned way. One young person was learning to drive. These activities were all clearly increasing confidence in these young people and building their resilience.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

The children and young people living at the home are all kept very safe. Safeguarding at the home is excellent.

The staff have a good understanding of risk, they assess this well and take appropriate action to minimise any identified risks. They take a practical, age-appropriate view of the risks that young people face. An older young person who is vulnerable has put themselves at some risk through inappropriate use of social media. The staff have helped and supported the young person to understand the risks but allowed continued use of the internet with some checks being put in place. A younger child who wishes to play out in the village is given some free time. However, staff provide discreet but effective monitoring and supervision with clear boundaries until such time as they are happy that the child is safe. This allows the child to make friends and gain confidence out in the local community in a safe way. This is proactive childcare practice as it replicates that provided in any caring and responsible family.

There have been a few safeguarding issues involving the children and young people at the home, particularly involving social media. These have been responded to quickly and effectively. This meant that no additional incidents occurred. No child or young person has gone missing. There have been no other significant safeguarding incidents or issues arising during the period since the previous inspection.

The staff offer the children and young people clear boundaries and expectations and reinforce these with advice and guidance. The staff have used a few sanctions and occasional, low-level physical interventions but these are rare.

The staff have, under the guidance of a psychologist, developed a more in-depth

approach to assessing and understanding the needs of the children and young people. This work has included the use of a strengths and difficulties assessments. This innovative work contributes towards a greater understanding of the children and young people and also contributes towards keeping them safe. Over time, the staff have made an exceptional difference to the lives of these children and young people.

The home is well maintained and there are no health and safety issues.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post for almost two years and is appropriately qualified. She ensures that the home meets the aims and objectives as written in the statement of purpose.

The registered manager is an effective and confident leader. There is no doubt that she is highly motivated to provide the best care for the children and young people who live in the home. She is ambitious for all of the children and young people and she is influential in changing their lives.

She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of her staff team and she continues to develop both the team and the service as a whole. She has embarked on providing a more in-depth approach towards meeting the needs of the children and young people and this is now starting to show itself in the very good progress of all the children and young people. The provider organisation has engaged the services of a skilled psychologist who is supporting and training staff to be more aware of in-depth psychological issues and to be more thorough in meeting need. Members of the staff team are responding well and are raising their standards of work to meet the high expectations of the registered manager.

The registered manager supports her staff team well with regular supervision and regular training. As well as keeping all of the staff team up to date with refresher and core training, she is providing advanced training around attachment theory.

As well as making improvements within the staff team, the registered manager is strong and effective at maintaining and developing relationships with external agencies and other professionals. She has strong links with the school and colleges that the children and young people attend. She has worked closely with a local education authority to support one young person to move schools to good effect. She has negotiated appropriate external assessments when they have been needed and has referred children and young people for appropriate work with specialist providers when this has been required.

The registered manager arranged that the psychologist who supports the staff team would attend the school of one of the children both to advise the teaching staff about the needs of the child and also to conduct attachment training with them. This demonstrates forward thinking, excellent commitment to the child and a real commitment to wider childcare services.

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection and none have been made at this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC392549

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Duty of Care Limited

Responsible individual: David Heartfield

Registered manager: Susan Kells

Inspector:

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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