

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397112
Inspector	Marina Tully
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Alliance Care & Education Limited
Registered person address	Brow Top Farm Quernmore LANCASTER LA2 0QW
Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	Jade Ann O'Connor
Date of last inspection	12/08/2014

Inspection date	09/03/2015
Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Young people continue to receive outstanding care and guidance from a skilled and dedicated team. They benefit from clear and consistent boundaries and routines. Consequently, they fully engage in education and make noticeable improvements in their learning and development. As well as maintaining excellent school attendance; young people receive additional tuition to enhance their academic attainment. Such achievements are celebrated with constant praise and rewards from staff. Some young people have received awards from their placing local authorities in recognition of their success.

A key strength is the home's commitment to partnership working and comprehensive placement planning that reflect individual needs and circumstances. Staff proactively work with a range of professionals to ensure young people's needs are effectively addressed. For example, young people are linked in with specialist services, such as sexual exploitation projects and smoking cessation clinics as a means of improving their physical and emotional health. A social worker said, 'I can't praise them enough. Staff are fantastic, they keep me regularly updated.'

Staff have high aspirations for those in their care; this is mirrored in young people's self-belief and ambitions. One young person has plans to go to university and study for a career in child psychology. Young people are confident and enjoy learning and trying new things. Staff encourage and support them to undertake online courses on first aid, equality and diversity and healthy eating. This ensures that they are increasing their awareness and developing skills on important matters, which will also benefit them in later life.

Young people who are new to the home receive excellent support and therefore settle in quickly. Young people feel safe and secure and recognise the benefits of consistent care and structured boundaries. A young person said, 'I found the

boundaries hard at first, but I understand why they're in place. They have helped me move forward.' Staff ensure that those moving on are fully prepared and arrangements are in place to enable their continued progress. Two young people have successfully moved out of the home since the last inspection. This success is down to effective collaborative working, with families and young people, to ensure appropriate plans are in place.

Young people benefit from engaging in a range of activities, such as holidays abroad, singing and drama lessons, as well as time socialising with friends. As a result they are developing new skills and greater confidence, which enhances their emotional resilience.

Young people's safety is paramount in this home. Staff are extremely competent at keeping everyone safe. Staff receive specific training on matters such as, child sexual exploitation (CSE). Furthermore, young people benefit from attending this training with staff. As a result, risk taking behaviour such as missing from home and CSE significantly declines and young people feel safe and secure.

Staff value young people's views and make diligent efforts to involve them in daily decisions as well as wider placement planning. This is achieved through regular and effective house meetings, one-to-one sessions with the manager and meaningful participation at care planning meetings and reviews. Young people, therefore, feel listened to and respected and are willing to engage.

The manager's monitoring of the home is effective; this is reflected in the outstanding quality of care as well as young people's progress and safety. However, improvements can be made in the monthly independent monitoring of the home. Recent visits have not been carried out while young people are at home. Their views are not, therefore, consistently included in the home's independent monthly monitoring.

The home continues to be led by an enthusiastic and dedicated manager who has the young people's welfare at the heart of her practice. Staff are supported and developed through excellent training, regular supervision and structured team meetings. Consequently, the home is run by a happy, skilled, content and stable team. The recommendation raised at the last inspection, in respect of e-safety training for staff, has been addressed.

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/08/2014	Full	outstanding
26/03/2014	Interim	good progress
13/01/2014	Full	outstanding
05/03/2013	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 visits to the home carried out under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance. This is specifically in relation to the visitor providing opportunities for consultation with children and young people. (NMS 21.7)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.