

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC397344
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Birtenshaw
Registered provider address	Birtenshaw, Darwen Road, Bolton BL7 9AB

Responsible individual	David Reid
Registered manager	Marie Smith
Inspector	Jo Hornby

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC397344

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people are making remarkable progress in all aspects of their development from their starting points.
- Staff work with young people and their families to ensure that contact between them is meaningful and safe. This has resulted in young people's contact being increased.
- Young people are afforded a wide range of opportunities and experiences, which have assisted them to gain in confidence. They are now able to manage situations in ways that had been thought unattainable.
- Staff are highly creative in helping young people to manage their behaviour in a more positive way. This has reduced the number of incidents requiring physical intervention.
- Staff support young people to lead healthy lifestyles. Healthy diets and exercise have increased young people's fitness levels, emotional and physical health and their self-esteem.
- An isolated safeguarding incident was effectively dealt with by the manager. She acted quickly to ensure that young people were safe.
- The manager is transparent and proactive and has high expectations of her staff. She ensures that research is used and informs staff practice, affording young people specific care for their complex needs.
- The home is highly regarded by parents and placing authorities who give very positive feedback regarding the care that the young people receive.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate that a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, 9.2)
- Registered persons have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons, which may include establishments in the local community, such as community police. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, 10.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of homes, which operate as part of a charitable organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/09/2015	Full	Good
17/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/08/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people enjoy settled placements. They have made exceptional progress in all aspects of their development since their admission. Consistent approaches and creative strategies mean that young people are well supported to manage their behaviour and to keep themselves safe. Staff enable young people to attend their education provision. They work collaboratively with education staff, communicating daily to promote consistency and structure. Strategies and approaches are regularly discussed between the two disciplines to develop consistent responses to meeting young people's educational needs and to managing their behaviour. Staff are involved in helping young people to make adjustments to changes in their education provision. They support them to settle into their new schools, dealing swiftly with any issues to ensure that young people receive the right level of education. A member of staff said, '[Name] has had some adjustments to make around changes in education, and he has coped remarkably well. [Name]'s handwriting skills have improved significantly. She is able to read simple words and sentences with support and can write very clearly and neatly.' Young people benefit from living in a warm and welcoming environment, where they enjoy strong relationships with their staff. The home is personalised throughout with photographs of the young people who live there. Staff support and encourage young people to choose the decor for their bedrooms. They find out young people's likes and dislikes from families in order to help and support young people to create their own spaces. For example, posters of pop groups and favourite toys afford young people a calming space when they are feeling anxious or distressed. Staff are keen to promote contact between young people and their families. They maintain close links with young people's families and facilitate regular, safe contact, regardless of the distance. Some young people are supported to use Skype to speak to their parents each evening. Staff work with families and encourage and support them to follow behaviour management plans. This proactive approach promotes consistent care and has enabled young people's contact to increase. With the support from staff, young people have enjoyed a summer holiday at a caravan park, and others have been on holiday with their families. The manager is considering ways in which this can progress further and plans to discuss this with the young people's placing authorities and parents. A parent said, 'I wouldn't be able to have as much contact with my child if it wasn't for the support of the staff.'	

Young people have comprehensive health plans. They are registered with medical professionals, such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Social stories assist young people to understand what will happen when they see these people, helping them to remain calm during these appointments. Staff endeavour to make these appointments positive experiences. For example, young people who need to wear prescription glasses are supported to choose ones they prefer, such as glow-in-the-dark glasses. Staff work collaboratively with child and adolescent mental health services to ensure that young people's highly complex needs are addressed. They act on the advice given from these services to ensure that they provide the right level of care for young people's physical and emotional needs. Healthy eating and exercise have helped young people to increase their energy levels, improve fitness and increase self-esteem. Young people are taking a pride in their appearance without prompting from staff. Consequently, young people are flourishing and are enjoying good health.

Staff provide young people with a wide range of experiences and activities. New experiences are meticulously planned with young people, to ensure that they have sufficient time to process information. Staff use a measured, repetitive approach, which very gradually builds up to an event. This method has enabled young people to learn new skills towards independence, such as helping to cook and participating in household chores, and to manage self-care skills. Staff have sourced new opportunities and experiences for young people to participate in, such as archery, tree climbing and riding in a speedboat. This has increased young people's self-confidence and self-esteem.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff have a full understanding of each young person's risks and vulnerabilities. Clear, comprehensive risk assessments identify young people's individual known risks, and their assessments are regularly updated when these risks change. Young people's goals and accomplishments are not hindered by their vulnerabilities. Staff ensure that they have optimal life experiences, supported by highly effective planning to minimise risks both inside and outside of the home. Staff's hard work, determination and support have enabled young people to have many social experiences in the community, such as swimming and visits to organised outdoor activities. This has helped to improve relationships between the young people. Staff have an excellent knowledge of young people and promote positive	

behaviour. With the commitment, patience and support of staff, young people are now able to communicate with words and to read short sentences. Picture symbols and help scripts assist young people with daily living and keeping safe. These methods also assist staff to communicate effectively with young people, helping them to manage their emotions and providing them with a calm, supportive environment. Redirection and de-escalation strategies, as outlined in behaviour management plans, are followed. Staff enable young people to design strategies to help them with their anxieties and frustrations. For example, some young people use fairy dust, head massagers and dream catchers to manage these. This creative approach has proved highly successful, and the use of physical intervention has reduced.

Young people are aware that sometimes staff will use physical restraint to keep them safe, because this is explained to them. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of incidents involving some young people, which have necessitated the use of physical intervention. These techniques are designed to ensure that young people do not harm themselves, other young people or staff. These methods are low level and for a short period. Interventions have reduced since the last inspection because staff help and support young people to manage their behaviour, by using time out, praising positive interactions and responding in a calm manner. These strategies are regularly reviewed and monitored, and adjusted as and when necessary. The majority of these interventions are for young people who need to be supported by a mechanical harness to keep them safe when outside of the home. Following each intervention, staff and young people are offered support. The manager maintains clear evaluative records of each incident, to ensure that the method used was proportionate and necessary. A social worker said, 'Staff are very good at debriefing [Name]. I am highly pleased with how the manager evaluates incidents of physical intervention and looks at whether this was necessary and proportionate. I can't fault them.'

An isolated safeguarding incident has recently occurred that was handled effectively by the manager. Safeguarding agencies, such as the placing authority, the home's designated officer and parents, were informed immediately, and plans were swiftly put into place to ensure that young people were protected from harm. The manager followed established procedures that included notifying HMCI on the day of the incident. The inspector found the manager to be transparent and to have strength in following appropriate procedures and systems. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and behaviour management. Individual risk assessments and strategies used to keep young people safe from harm are thorough and well considered. An independent reviewing officer commented, 'The manager dealt with this incident appropriately.'

Staff consult with health professionals to assist them to devise strategies to help young people who have complex needs to manage independent living tasks, such as shopping in a supermarket. Staff act on the advice provided by these people, for example by initially visiting smaller shops and progressing to larger supermarkets. This has been very successful for one young person who is now able to shop with

staff in a large supermarket. A social worker said, 'This is a massive achievement and has helped [Name] with her transition to adulthood. I would recommend this home and would place other children here.'

There are no young people living at the home who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Staff have a good awareness of the signs, and would follow the organisation's missing from home protocols and liaise with safeguarding agencies if this were to become a cause of concern.

The home has effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the local authority in which the home is located. The manager intends to consider inviting the community police officer to meet the young people. This would raise young people's awareness of how this service supports and helps people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been in post since September 2010. She is suitably qualified and experienced and holds the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She is highly child focused and proactive and prioritises the needs of young people. She has a comprehensive understanding of young people's highly complex needs and is supported by an experienced registered manager delegate who shares her dedication to providing high-quality care. Care and placement plans are individualised and comprehensively address young people's care needs and experiences. The manager has high expectations of her staff, driving and inspiring them to be creative and to evaluate the work that they do. She consistently monitors the quality of care provided in the home, learning from practice and seeking regular feedback from young people, parents and stakeholders to improve their care and experiences. She has excellent oversight of young people's individual plans, ensuring that they are meaningful and attainable and clearly evidence the progress that young people have made from their admission. The manager maintains positive professional relationships with a number of external services and fosters a combined approach to meeting young people's needs. These strong links provide direct support for young people and are used to provide staff with information, training and support, which enhances their skills in meeting young people's needs. This has proved effective in helping young people to make positive progress in terms of their individual goals, including keeping	

themselves safe from harm. A social worker said, 'Staff are very good at engaging with us. I am very pleased with the placement. There are no issues at all.'

Staff supervision and annual appraisal are facilitated by the manager and focus on the progress of young people and staff development. The manager uses research-based practice to inform care provision and ensures that young people are afforded the best care possible. This information is shared with staff and ensures that their care practice is based on strong foundations. A member of staff said, 'I feel supported by the manager. If we have to cancel supervision we always make another date.'

Young people benefit from being cared for by a dedicated, enthusiastic, well-trained staff team, which has a detailed understanding of how to meet their needs, including those associated with their disabilities. All staff complete mandatory training, which is accompanied by needs-specific training, such as understanding autism. These training opportunities ensure that staff are well equipped to meet the diverse range of needs, which young people currently have.

The manager has developed a number of ways in which young people can give their views on their feelings and emotions. For example, bubble conversations provide a tool for young people to think about how they can deal with emotions such as anger and distress in a more positive way. Following consultation with child and family mental health services, a star chart system has been implemented. These charts are intended for staff to analyse triggers to behaviour on the day or week prior to escalation in behaviour. This method has been highly successful in assisting staff to identify patterns and trends, and has enabled young people to use their individual preferred strategies at an earlier stage. This has resulted in reducing the number of incidents and helping young people to remain calm. At the request of the young people, the manager has developed a computer room where young people's goals and achievements are celebrated. A social worker said, 'The manager is very effective. I am more than pleased with the manager and staff team.'

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 that 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Text phone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016