

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC399586
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	First 4 Care Limited
Registered provider address	313 Goodison Boulevard, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 6TP

Responsible individual	Carolann Dodds
Registered manager	Samantha Miller
Inspector	Tina Ruffles

Inspection date	09/08/2016
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

SC399586

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff are committed to improving the skills of young people and recognising their potential. They patiently work to help young people make progress.
- Young people make significant progress in all areas of their development as a result of the consistent care, clear boundaries and routines provided by the committed staff team.
- An improvement in personal care and household tasks provides young people with dignity and independence.
- Young people enjoy living at the home and have developed close relationships with each other.
- Young people have excellent school and college attendance and make continued progress with their education.
- Staff obtain the views of parents about young people's cultural issues to ensure that these are well met.
- Young people live in a safe environment due to the high staff ratio.
- Whistleblowing procedures are in place, with staff clear about what to do to ensure that young people with communication difficulties are kept safe.
- Staff use a calm and consistent approach, with strong boundaries in place. There has been a vast reduction in all young peoples' negative behaviours as a result of this approach.
- The stable staff team provide consistency for young people who need routines and familiarity in their lives.

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

Requirement	Due date
In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating: the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45(2) (a)(b)(c))	01 October 2016

Recommendations

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

- Children who cannot or choose not to verbalise have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and respected in the same way as other children. Specifically, communication techniques within the home should be improved. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.24)
- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. Specifically, they should monitor and record positive behaviour strategies and their impact on encouraging participation and/or improving behaviour. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.13)
- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make

reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. This relates specifically to educating staff to work more restoratively. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children with a diagnosable learning disability or with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2015	Full	Good
09/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/11/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The manager and staff team have a very good understanding of the young people's physical, behavioural, emotional and social needs. Staff are committed to improving the skills of young people. They recognise young peoples' potential, taking their starting point into account, and patiently work on any area of a young person's development. Young people make significant progress and improvements in respect to their personal hygiene, daily living and social skills. This is a result of the consistent care, clear boundaries and routines provided by the committed staff team which in turn promotes young people's dignity and independence. Young people are relaxed and comfortable at the home. They have developed a close relationship with each other which resembles that of siblings. This helps with the development of social skills and empathy. Young people take part in a range of activities and go on outings, some of which are enjoyed together. One young person went on a residential trip with his school for the first time. Another young person attends the army cadets. The range of activities provide young people with new opportunities and experiences helping them to develop their social interactions, improve their self-confidence and become more disciplined. Improvements to language and communication skills helps young people who have communication difficulties to make their wishes known. In spite of this, staff develop a good understanding of young people's needs through observation of their behaviour and mannerisms. This is a result of staff spending a considerable amount of time with them. Young people are offered choices and participate in young people's meetings and have visual aids to assist them. However, young people's communication abilities are not fully realised. This hampers young people fully expressing themselves now and into adulthood. Young people make continued progress with their education. They have excellent school and college attendance and enjoy attending. Young people are involved in extra curriculum activities. Staff have close links with the school and college, both of which provide a monitoring and reporting system for young people, particularly those who travel independently. Upon their return home, staff support young people if there are any issues at school or college. Staff celebrate young people's success, with plenty of certificates on display in the home. This recognises young people's achievements and boosts confidence. One	

young person is also embarking on voluntary work, and with staff support is looking for paid employment. There are sessions built into daytime schedules for staff to provide additional support in respect of education. Young people are supported to reach their full potential.

Young people's health needs are fully met. Staff look at inventive ways to ensure that young people have a healthy diet and maintain a good weight. Exercise and participation in sports is encouraged. This has resulted in a young person gradually losing weight. One young person is now self-medicating, which offers him independence and dignity, especially when away from the home. Staff work alongside family members to achieve the best outcomes for young people in respect of their medical needs. The improvement in diet and lifestyle provides short- and long-term health benefits to young people.

Staff ensure that religious practices involving food and festivals are followed. They obtain the views of parents in respect of cultural issues to ensure that these needs are well met at the home. They also educate young people in different religions and cultures to make them more understanding and tolerant of others.

Independence skills are encouraged, although young people do not always fully participate. One young person is learning to drive, which is remarkable progress for him. This will assist his independence when he leaves care, particularly with respect to employment opportunities.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people live in a safe environment. Staff are vigilant, especially with young people who are at risk as a result of their medical condition. This helps young people stay safe throughout the day and night with a one-to-one staff ratio. Young people have time alone in the home but are regularly monitored by staff. The risk assessments provide staff with clear instructions about managing potential concerns. This ensures that consistent approaches are taken and young people are kept safe. Whistleblowing procedures are in place, with staff clear about what to do. This provides reassurances to young people with limited communication, who may not be able to express their concerns. Young people develop skills to travel alone in the community. Staff work sensitively with parents in respect of risk management to encourage them to allow young people to develop these skills. This offers independence and increased confidence and opens up a whole range of new experiences and opportunities for young	

people. Staff ensure young people have a mobile phone when they are away from the home and they are given strategies to keep themselves safe in the community. Staff complete monitoring checks and are aware of young people's whereabouts.

There have been no missing from care episodes. However, staff are knowledgeable about how to respond if needed. There are also no child sexual exploitation concerns but staff know how to mitigate these and refer on to other agencies.

There has been a vast reduction in all young people's negative behaviours, with a decline in incidents of anger or aggression within the home. Staff monitor and chart the challenging behaviour and obtain advice from a mental health practitioner. Reflective discussions in team meetings allow for behaviour management plans to be updated and amended. Staff recognise triggers for particular behaviours and use a calm and consistent approach. Strong boundaries and routines are in place, which all staff follow. Reward charts acknowledge young people's positive achievements. As a result, young people are more able to manage their difficult feelings.

Staff teach young people how to regulate their emotional responses when they are away from the home. They recognise that external influences sometimes affect how they would normally respond and teach young people new strategies. This has resulted in a decline in young people's offending behaviour.

There are excellent links with family members, who regularly come to the home. Staff are also actively involved in supporting contact away from the home. Parents feel able to request support in an emergency if they are unable to manage their child's behaviour. This input from staff helps to prevent any escalation to the police, reducing the risk of criminalisation. One parent said, 'His social skills are a lot better. He thinks before reacting but I have support if needed with staff on call.'

Staff manage young people's concerning behaviour through the use of negative sanctions. Their current approach does not help young people link their feelings, thoughts and behaviours and is a missed opportunity to work restoratively.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager has been in post since May 2016 but has worked at the home for nearly six years. She has recently become the registered manager for the home and will shortly be finishing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. The manager has the necessary qualification, skills and experience to fulfil her role.	

There is a full staff team who are all suitably qualified. Ongoing training is provided to ensure that staff's knowledge is kept up to date. Staff are proud of their achievements in obtaining qualifications. Motivated, experienced and knowledgeable staff work at the home. One young person said the staff were 'Good' and gave them '7/10'.

The strength of the home is the longevity of the staff team, particularly the manager, who has been a consistent link for parents and professionals. One professional said, 'Despite the management changes, the quality of care has remained the same.' A parent echoed this and said, 'The manager has been the constant one there. I have a good relationship with her.'

The stable staff team has provided continuity for the young people. This is particularly important for the young people at the home, who need routine in their lives and staff who know them well.

There is now a new management and staff structure in place to improve the service provision. Delegated supervision tasks will provide more timely supervision sessions for staff.

Some of the recognised weaknesses have been gaps in paperwork, work needed on evidencing progress and obtaining feedback from others. This has been as a result of staff spending time with young people. The manager recognises the need to work on these areas with the new management team to develop a system of monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided. She said, 'We are an outstanding home for what we provide and just need to demonstrate this.' Young people will benefit from targets being set, monitored and reviewed to ensure that they make continued progress.

The statement of purpose outlines that the home's 'primary aim is to maximise the potential of each individual child and young person'. The staff take a collaborative approach to working with the young people, parents, social care, police, health and educational professionals. This provides a holistic approach for young people. The manager has built up good links with different agencies and professionals, which ensures that young people receive timely support and assistance in all areas of their lives.

The manager is forward-thinking and has development plans in place to make the home the best it can be for the young people living there.

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 children looked after 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'.

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