

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC408369
Inspector	Julia Wright
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Stoke on Trent City Council
Registered person address	City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre Glebe Street STOKE-ON-TRENT ST4 1HH
Responsible individual	Susan Hammersley
Registered manager	Kevan John Hopkinson
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	23/10/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home provides highly individualised care to young people. Young people benefit from a staff team who are committed to their needs and where strong relationships between staff and young people enhance and reinforce the positive care they receive. This is further strengthened through liaison with external agencies. As a result, young people receive care that meets their global needs. Given their starting points, young people make excellent progress in all areas of their development.

Young people have a positive view about their lives and recognise the progress they are making. Given their ages and stage of development, young people are supported with independence programmes to prepare them for independent life. Young people know that staff value them and care about them and there is a culture of trust and mutual respect in the home.

Young people are safe and feel safe. The environment is maintained and safety checks ensure that hazards are identified and addressed. The management of the home is very good. A clear development plan is in place to develop the service offered to young people and to further enhance the service offered. Shortfalls identified at the last inspection have been met overall although the last quality assurance report from the Registered Manager has been completed but not submitted to Ofsted.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for two young people between 10 and 18 who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/01/2014	Full	good
10/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
17/07/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for -(1)(a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals at least once in every 3 months.	01/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are - (e)kept

clean and reasonably decorated and maintained, in particular, the bathroom.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make very significant progress in all aspects of their lives. They develop a positive self-view and resilience. This is because young people receive comprehensive and individualised care that reflects their abilities, interests and vulnerabilities. Young people say 'I like it here. The staff are good and kind and we do things'. Social Workers say, 'My young person has made great progress here'.

Young people are involved with a variety of educational placements. Taking into consideration their starting points, young people are making significant progress with their education. One young person has progressed from part time to a full time school placement, and is proud of their achievements to date. Since the last inspection, independent reviews for the young people have concluded that they are making good progress with their education. This means that young people have the opportunity to progress and succeed in their lives and maximise their opportunities.

Young people improve their awareness and understanding of safety due to the staff team. They are better at managing their own risk taking behaviours. For example, where a young person had used cannabis, this has reduced. As a result, young people are healthier. Young people use the excellent communication with staff to enable them to develop strong relationships with people they respect. As a result, young people are safer as they keep staff informed of their whereabouts when they are out in the community.

Young people feel valued because they are consulted about their care planning and the running of the home. For example one young person said that they chose their decoration for their bedroom, and chose what meals they would like during the week.

Contact with family and friends are a high priority, and young people use staff support and transport to maintain contact with their families and friends wherever possible. This ensures that young people retain links with their family members contributing to their understanding of their background. Friends are invited to the home where appropriate and young people report feeling pleased that they can invite their friends to the home as it makes them feel 'ordinary'.

Improvements in young people's health are evident. They engage with opportunities to develop their awareness about their health. For example, young people engage with therapeutic services, they eat a healthy diet; they are encouraged to participate in activities, to exercise and maintain a healthy weight. This means that young people optimise their physical and emotional health and enjoy their lives.

Young people participate in a wide range of community activities relevant to their interests. One young person is involved with a number of external activities and

interests and has increased their self confidence as a result.

Given their age, preparation for independence is an important focus for the young people. Young people are developing a comprehensive range of skills and abilities equipping them for semi independent life and adulthood. Links are in place with a training flat identified as a next step for young people. Young people progress as they consistently engage with the support of staff and other professionals. For example, one young person who was unable to travel independently is now able to. As a result, this has increased their confidence and self- respect.

Quality of care

outstanding

Staff care about the young people and strive to assist young people to reach their potential in all areas of their lives. Staff are motivated, enthusiastic and have high aspirations for the young people in their care. Relationships between staff and young people are supported by the application of clear and consistent boundaries and this means that young people respond positively to staff overall. Very good quality care planning means that young people are valued and nurtured, and this further improves their welfare and development. Relatives say 'staff do a fantastic job with my young person. I know how settled they are at the home, and that makes me feel relaxed and confident'.

The staff consistently challenge barriers to the full time participation of young people in education. Staff have identified educational placements for the young people and staff and other professionals have worked with young people to enhance their educational opportunities. Staff support the young people during their attendance at school or their educational scheme. Young people are able to telephone staff if they feel anxious or unsettled and staff are proactive in liaising with other professionals to ensure that the young person is supported and focussed on their learning. As a result, young people are able to make the best progress possible and are able to remain focussed on their tasks. Young people feel proud of their achievements, for example with work experience, and this increases their confidence and self-esteem as a result.

Young people's views and opinions are consistently sought by staff, not only through regular meetings with young people, but also through an ongoing dialogue and discussion with the young people during the course of each day. This focus on communication develops and enhances very good relationships that have been developed between staff and young people. As a result, young people learn to trust staff and invest in a relationship with staff, and in their lives at the home. One professional commented 'Staff have been fantastic helping my young person to settle. I can see that this has worked as photos are out in the bedroom, a sign they are relaxed there'.

Strong relationships have been developed between staff and external agencies.

Successful communication systems are in place. One Social Worker commented 'the staff can be relied on to keep me informed'. These systems ensure that young people's welfare is promoted and enhanced.

Staff are creative in supporting young people's understanding of their background, and ensure that young people gather and store important information in their 'memory boxes'. This is valuable work, allowing young people to keep mementoes and memories and allows young people the opportunity to reflect with staff about past and current events. This contributes to young people's emotional wellbeing and assists their understanding about the progress of their lives.

Staff welcome young people's friends and family to the home, wherever appropriate. Young people are pleased that they can welcome people to their home, and staff are able to meet and get to know the young people's friends enhancing staff understanding of young people's networks. This helps to keep young people safe.

Young people's good health is supported and promoted by staff with individualised healthcare plans. Staff maintain good access to a range of healthcare agencies to meet the needs of the young people. As a result, young people enjoy good health and a healthy lifestyle.

The home provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the young people. It is well decorated and very comfortable furnished. The bathroom is in need of some minor improvements, although this does not have an impact on the quality of care the young people receive.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

Young people and their relatives reported that young people are safe at the home. One young person said 'I can always talk to staff if I am worried'.

Clear risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place for each young person. Staff are skilled and successful in balancing protecting young people and recognising a young person's need to experiment and challenge boundaries, whilst always ensuring their safety. This means that young people can take risks as part of their development without compromising their safety.

There have not been any young people missing from care since the last inspection. Where unauthorised absences occur, excellent communication between staff and young people means that staff know where the young people are and staff keep in touch with them to ensure that they can return to the home safely. This approach reassures young people and enhances their safety.

The staff team are meticulous in ensuring that risk assessments and planning for young people is regularly reviewed. This means that young people's plans are up to

date and relevant reflecting their needs. The Registered Manager has improved links and protocols with the local police and attends quarterly meetings with police and other homes to share information relevant to the care of the young people. As a result, young people's safety is identified as top priority for the home and they are kept safe from harm.

Physical restraint is rare as staff encourage the young people to use thinking skills to manage their behaviour. Where sanctions are used, these are proportionate. Recording ensures that young people's views are noted. As a result, young people participate and their voices are heard. Since the last inspection, there have not been any serious events requiring notification to Ofsted. This positive approach towards the young people was evident by the polite and courteous behaviour of the young people during this inspection.

Staff are appropriately vetted prior to commencing their employment in the home. This means that the young people are kept safe from adults who may wish to harm them. Visitors are checked and monitored, again to ensure the young people's safety. The home provides an on call service by senior staff so that young people and staff are fully supported 24 hours each day.

All necessary checks for gas, electrical and fire safety have been undertaken. This ensures that young people live in an environment which is safe and hazard free. Regular fire drills take place involving all young people and staff to make sure that everyone is familiar with the evacuation drill from the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home is very well managed by a Registered Manager. The Registered Manager has been in post at the home for 19 months. He has a degree in Social Work and a post qualifying degree in working with children, young people and carers. He has an exceptional commitment to promoting positive outcomes for young people and providing high quality care, and these are evident in the young people's progress since being placed at the home.

The Registered Manager has highly effective management systems in place. Regular quality assurance monitoring from the organisation is undertaken monthly and provides the management team with development areas, which are acted upon. This process of external quality assurance ensures young people are being very well cared for and that they are living in a safe and caring environment. There has been a delay with the three monthly quality assurance reports being completed by the Registered Manager and being sent to Ofsted. This has not had an impact on the care received by the young people.

Young people experience a sense of permanency and stability as there is a strong and stable staff team. Whilst agency staff are sometimes used, these are consistent

and young people are able to develop a relationship with them reinforcing young people's sense of security and safety.

Young people are looked after by staff who are themselves supported by a strong leadership team. Staff receive regular supervision and training. Recording and effective communication are particular strengths of the staff team. This places young people at the centre of practice and enhances young people's welfare.

The Registered Manager has a secure knowledge of the home's strengths and areas for development. The home has a detailed development plan which involves all the staff team and demonstrates the cohesive environment of the home. The Registered Manager's commitment to continually improving the service for young people results in a service that is flexible to the needs of the young people and one that is determined to meet their needs.

The Registered Manager has shown dedication and commitment to the needs of the young people by carefully matching the young people's needs when a vacancy arose recently. This ensured that young people's placements were not destabilised by a poor match and as a result, young people continue to benefit from their placement at the home.

Staff are vigilant and make sure that the environment is safe and any deficits quickly repaired. This ensures that young people are protected from hazards in the home. Young people have a good quality environment in which to enjoy their lives. Strong relationships between staff and young people are evident in this home. Staff work hard to enable young people to explore and resolve their concerns. The Registered Manager and staff make clear efforts to address issues and improve the service. This ensures that young people's well-being is of primary concern.

Previous requirements from the last inspection have been met overall. There have not been any notifications since the last inspection. The quality assurance reports completed by the Registered Manager have been forwarded to Ofsted apart from the most recent one. The Statement of Purpose has been updated to include the number, relevant qualifications and experience of staff working at the home.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.