

Children's homes inspection – Interim

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC411030
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Meadows Care Ltd
Registered provider address	Meadows Care Ltd, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual	Niel Shelmerdine
Registered manager	Daniel Blackburn
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The judgement at this inspection reflects the improvement in the effectiveness of leadership, management and safeguarding practice which have occurred since the home's full inspection in November 2016. Four requirements and one recommendation were made in order to improve practice further. All of these have been fully addressed by the manager at the point of this interim inspection. This shows that he learns from inspection activity in order to promote the development of the service. At the full inspection, staffing levels was identified as a particular area of concern. The home had become heavily reliant on agency staff and non-core bank staff, who didn't know the young people or the home. However, at this inspection staffing arrangements have notably improved. The need to use bank staff or outside agency workers has reduced considerably. Furthermore, the organisation has been proactive in the recruitment and induction of new staff. This ensures that staff are well supported in their new roles and are familiar with young people's needs and personalities. Longer-standing members of the team confirm that staff morale, consistency and communication have also improved. This is having a positive effect on the experiences of young people living in the home, and progress is apparent. Young people have good experiences and make good progress across some aspects of their lives. This is because they live in a supportive home environment, which provides them with structure and routine. Young people are fully engaged with their individual education provisions. They have good attendance and are progressing well, in line with their abilities. They benefit from well-planned care, which is highly personalised to their specific needs. The manager has established positive relationships with placing authorities and other agencies. This has enabled one young person to progress to over 90% attendance in school. His progress was highlighted in a recent school report. Comments included: '[name] has a chance of obtaining five or more GCSEs grade A* to C. He produces excellent standards of work and is a pleasure to teach.' This young person also received an education award from his placing authority, which validated his sense of pride and achievement.	

Young people experience individualised care, and this gives them a good sense of belonging, particularly during periods of difficulties. Staff present as child-focused and committed, and the strong relationships between staff and young people mean that all young people receive positive attention, even when they are struggling with their behaviour. Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. There is a strong emphasis on the use of rewards and praise. Young people benefit from the consistent boundaries and structure; as a result, there have been no physical restraints, and a minimum use of sanctions.

Risk assessments are thorough and regularly updated. Staff are completely aware of potential risks and understand how to prevent them. Overall there has been a marked improvement in the staff team's ability to manage challenging situations. In response to a requirement made at the last inspection, a considerable amount of reflection and training has taken place. New strategies have been implemented, many of which were influenced by the organisation's therapy team. Consequently, staff are more confident and able to reflect. This enables them to provide good quality care to young people.

The majority of young people currently living in the home do not place themselves at risk by going missing from the home. This further demonstrates that young people are settled. However, there has been one missing-from-home episode since the full inspection. The staff team knows the local area well, and records demonstrate that if a young person does go missing, staff take quick action to ensure the young person's safe return. A missing-from-home protocol and risk assessment is in place for each young person, and the staff team has received relevant training in this area. This promotes effective protection to young people should they choose to go missing from the home.

The leadership and management arrangements are effective. The quality assurance and monitoring systems are used well by the manager to ensure that he has a clear overview of the service. The manager has high expectations for all young people and expects staff to deliver a good standard of care. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and action plans are implemented within clear timeframes. This demonstrates the manager's ability to drive developments for the benefit of young people placed.

The team is appropriately supported to deliver a good standard of care. Records confirm that staff receive suitable training and have regular supervision. The manager undertakes annual appraisals to assess the staff team's ability to continue to perform its duties to a good standard. The leadership team sets high standards and has clear vision and aspiration for both the young people and the staff team.

To conclude, evidence gathered at this inspection highlights that the home has a continued capacity to improve. The manager has successfully addressed previous requirements and recommendations, and has a clear vision as to how to secure ongoing improvement. No further requirements have been made at this inspection.

This again demonstrates the manager's ability to learn from inspections and develop practice throughout the service.

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The organisation also has a therapy department as well as a school which young people can access if appropriate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
04/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
12/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 0300 123 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 children looked after 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
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017