

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC424280
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Nottingham City Council
Registered person address	Nottingham City Council, Loxley House Station Street NOTTINGHAM NG2 3NG
Responsible individual	Kay Sylvia Sutt
Registered manager	Marcel Winston Reid
Date of last inspection	28/02/2014

Inspection date	04/07/2014
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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	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are provided with a very caring and supportive environment, where they can quickly achieve stability and safety. They quickly benefit from a very helpful and supportive staff team, who build relationships with young people at the earliest opportunity. A high level of individual support allows for good progress to be made. Clear boundaries and expectations are consistently communicated and practiced because staff work well as a team to create a good level of consistency and continuity.

Young people are listened to and their views and wishes are clearly considered and incorporated into their individual plans. Good quality and individualised care planning are underpinned by thorough assessment information. Progress and development is closely monitored and shared regularly with others who are involved in helping young people move on successfully.

An experienced and qualified Registered Manager ensures the home is well organised and works effectively to ensure the stated aims and purpose of the home are achieved for every young person.

Young people make improvements with their behaviour, attendance with education and aspects of their health, for example giving up smoking as a result of the support

from the staff. In addition, young people are safer than they were before, for example with regard to their missing and other unsafe behaviours.

Whilst the home is judged as good, there are some improvements required to ensure that a good continuity of care continues. The shortfalls do not impact on young people at this time but may have the potential to do so in the future if they are not put right. Improvements needed include providing young people with the Ofsted telephone number, staff training to include training on child sexual exploitation and attachment issues and also in relation to risk assessment documentation, which does not always reflect staffs' good practice. In addition, the resources in the home do not always reflect the young people's interests and there are no school reports in the home making it difficult for staff to gain a picture of young people's attainment in different subjects.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority managed children's home which provides care and accommodation for two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
23/05/2013	Full	good
22/01/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
30/08/2012	Full	good

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
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by the home receive appropriate training, this is in relation to training in child sexual exploitation and in attachment disorders (Regulation 27,4,(a))	15/08/2014
4 (2001)	ensure that the young people's guide contains the telephone number and address of Ofsted (Regulation 4,3(c))	15/08/2014
23 (2001)	ensure that any activities in which young people participate are so far as reasonably practicable free from avoidable risks. (Regulation 23 (b))	15/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people are able to enjoy their interests and develop confidence in their skills (NMS 7)
- ensure that staff have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress. (NMS 8.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people experience a residential culture and ethos that creates stability. They are able to build emotional resilience and a positive self-view. This is because the experienced staff team carefully help young people to reflect on their circumstances and work through their difficulties positively. One young person reported 'staff are amazing'. Direct work with young people allows for them to fully explore their situation and as a result, young people become more confident and make good progress in many areas. For example with their education and behaviour.

Education arrangements are maintained and some young people go to school significantly more than they did before coming to the home. As a result, their education is enhanced and improved within a short space of time. The home's staff have close links with a range of local schools that young people use and this enables quick and effective communication between teachers and care staff. The value of education is strongly promoted and this approach benefits young people's attitude, attendance and attainment.

Young people are able to keep in touch with family members and significant people in their lives such as school and neighbourhood friends. Staff place a great significance on these arrangements as they are very important to young people. A proportionate approach to risk is taken, so that young people's friendships can develop further. This will enable them to grow in confidence and sustain good friendships in the future. In addition, staff and each young person are clear about contact arrangements, including any restrictions or limitations.

Young people's continued good health and well-being is a priority and detailed plans help staff to monitor individual needs. There is a clear emphasis on emotional well-being as well as young people's physical needs. Young people have many opportunities to talk about their health and lifestyles so they learn about behaviours that will improve their well-being and fitness. Young people have reduced their smoking and alcohol use significantly as a result of this placement, leading to a much healthier lifestyle. One young person reported 'I have quit smoking with the help of the staff'. Young people are encouraged to eat a balanced healthy diet and mealtimes are very communal, social events. Young people do not engage in criminal behaviour at this home and are able to learn about what and what is not socially acceptable through a high level of individual support from staff.

Young people prepare for their independence by developing their skills in cooking, cleaning and using public transport. The work is very individual and recorded, so that staff know what the young people are good at and what still needs to be done. This enables young people to work towards independence at a pace which is right for

them and optimises learning.

Quality of care

good

Young people develop very positive relationships with staff, which underpins the good levels of care and support they receive. Staff create a relaxed, calm and trusting environment, which allows young people the time and space to receive the support they require. Effective relationships and attachments are quickly established and used positively in helping young people to manage their behaviour and emotional difficulties. One young person said 'I love the staff, they are here for me and they are like being a parent'. Individualised care plans also ensure that the young people's needs are clearly set out so that staff know what they are and what they should do to meet them. One parent reported that staff are trying their hardest with regard to their young person's issues. Another relative reported staff are 'very good with him' reflecting the positive relationships and efforts of staff in encouraging young people to make progress.

Young people's views, wishes and feelings are established. They feel that they can influence certain aspects of the home's operation through meetings and key worker sessions ensuring that they can have their say. In addition, young people know about the complaints procedure so that they can use a more formal process for expressing their views and concerns. However, because of the high level of support and positive relationships with staff, young people are able to resolve their issues at a more informal level, before reaching the complaints stage. The young people's guide contains all the required telephone numbers along with an advocacy service if the young people wish to discuss anything with a more independent person. However, the Ofsted telephone number is not in the guide and therefore, young people may not know how to contact Ofsted if they have a concern or complaint about the home.

Staff are proactive in encouraging young people in their education. Where problems and difficulties arise, they work hard to liaise with school staff to resolve the issue so that young people can make as much progress as possible with their attendance. One social worker commented that staff are 'working hard' so that young people are able 'to maintain a certain standard of education' despite the difficulties in their life. However, school reports are not readily available to assist staff in their planning to further promote progress. Staff do know about young people's interests and talents and work hard to try to find new activities for them to try, for example plans for a holiday and indoor snow activities. However, some young people have not been motivated to engage. Staff really do try to engage young people and talk about interests in key working sessions, they think outside the box to encourage young people in this area. Resources in the home do not always fully reflect young people's interests, for example music and information technology.

Staff engage very well with outside professionals and know that there are times when they need to ask for advice or additional support for young people. For example, there are links with the looked after children (LAC) nurse and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which are very positive, so that the correct support can be given to young people to further promote their progress.

The house provides a very pleasant domestic setting and allows young people and staff the space to spend quality time together. Equally there is enough space for young people to spend time on their own, pursuing their own activities or relaxation. The layout of the home allows for good supervision of young people which promotes good behaviour and teaches young people about how to get on with others. One young person said 'I love it and there is a homely atmosphere'

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel very safe living at the home and with the staff who work with them. Their safety and welfare is staffs' top priority and where individuals present risks, there are risk assessments which support them to take proportionate risks in order to make progress. These documents also guide staff in the steps that they should take to minimise risk. One area of risk was found not to be risk assessed through the risk assessment documentation or in the young person's records. Despite this, the young person was clear that the risk was minimised by the work that staff had completed with them showing that this is more of a documentation issue. However this has the potential to impact on young people in the future because the steps that should be taken to minimise the risk are not always clearly set out for staff. The Registered Manager and staff work cooperatively with a range of external agencies to minimise any risks to young people. They inform other professionals as soon as possible so that all are aware of the most up-to-date safeguarding information. This means that decisions can be made quickly to protect young people's welfare. One social worker highlighted that communication with regard to information from the home is 'good'.

Previously accommodated young people have been missing since the last inspection and have presented with complex risks associated with missing. For example, they have been at risk of child sexual exploitation. Staff have worked hard to reduce the risk and to teach young people about issues of safety and how to protect themselves. This has worked well to promote safety and there are many positive comments in the home from a range of professionals commenting on improvements in this area. In addition, managers are not afraid to make difficult decisions about safety and are responsive to any emerging safety issues. For example, where young people are not making enough progress with their safety, they will advocate for a new placement to protect the young person further. Agreed working practices with external agencies ensure that staff respond immediately, should a young person go missing. Young people are unanimous in their belief that staff always respond appropriately and are

confident that staff would always report them missing. The action taken is in line with the local multi-agency protocol for missing young people as well as following specific, individualised plans, which are in place for each young person. A police representative talked about the work around missing and said 'they have really helped with our enquiries and to keep the young people safe'. They also spoke about staff doing 'miracles' with regard to one young person's progress, which is very positive.

Young people living in the home at this time have experienced a reduction in their incidents of missing and staff work hard with them so that they know to communicate with staff while they are out of the home. Staff report that one young person phones staff before staff have a chance to phone them, which they see as positive progress. In addition, one young person said 'staff call me all the time' showing that their whereabouts is well monitored to help to keep them safe.

Young people are positively supported and encouraged to work through any behavioural difficulties they have. Staff help to de-escalate difficult and potentially challenging situations and young people feel positive about the fact that staff know what to do when they have a behavioural incident. For example, one young person reported that staff know that he needs time alone to calm down. In addition, one young person said that their behaviour was 'better' and that they were 'angry less' as a result of staffs' approach. Young people are clear about behavioural boundaries as these are communicated clearly and consistently. The positive approach to behaviour ensures that all young people make good progress whatever their starting point. There has only been one physical intervention in the home since the last inspection and it is clear that this was to keep the staff safe. This reflects the staff's positive approach to behaviour management and has allowed for progress to be made.

Appropriate recruitment policies, procedures and practice ensure any new staff are suitably vetted prior to taking up their posts, so only suitably people work in the home. Young people's health and safety is also fully promoted through a range of staff practices that follow and adhere to environmental and fire risk assessments. Young people participate regularly in fire drills so they know how to safely exit the home if needed. Safety checks to maintain the environment are regularly undertaken to help keep risks to a minimum.

Leadership and management

good

Young people benefit from living in a home which is organised and managed well. An experienced, qualified Registered Manager is registered with Ofsted. He has several years of experience in residential settings and in working with young people. In addition, he holds the Diploma Level 5 in Management, which he has recently gained, showing his commitment to further learning and development. The Registered Manager is also well supported and supervised by external managers, who also contribute positively to the culture, ethos and working practices developed in the

home.

Young people benefit from a permanent and experienced staff team that has changed little in the last year. Staff are highly respected and liked by young people and they are very committed to the young people and their work in the home. The team is also well established and report that they are also an efficient team who work well together saying 'we are a good team and we communicate well'. This offers young people a good level of consistency and in turn this allows for good progress. It is very clear that the staff know their responsibilities and what they need to do to protect young people and promote their needs. Young people also feel that staff genuinely care about their well-being. One young person said 'it's good here because of the staff'.

Staff are also particularly well managed through high quality supervision. Their practice is well supervised and monitored to ensure that their performance, skill and competence consistently meets the young people's needs.

Staff regularly participate in core training events. This enables them to update their knowledge and skills, although specialist training to address some specific areas of need is not always organised. For example, staff do not routinely undertake specific training on attachment disorders and child sexual exploitation. This has not affected the young people because current staff demonstrate a good understanding of such issues. However, this has the potential to impact on young people in the future. This is because staff might not be working with the most up-to-date information if they have not had formal training.

Both internal and external monitoring of the home takes place regularly. Reports appropriately review performance and identify areas for improvement. Young people contribute positively to the monitoring processes including the performance of individual staff team members ensuring that they have their say. The Registered Manager is well supported and demonstrates a clear understanding of the strengths of the home and areas in need of improvement. This is reflected in the targets set in the home's development plan as well as individual targets identified for each member of staff for the next 12 months. As a result, the whole staff team are involved and responsible for the future development and progress of the home.

The three requirements from the last inspection have all been met. There are improvements to the care plans which now contain details of the young people's risks such as child sexual exploitation. The manager's quality assurance work contains the views of young people and other professionals and this informs future work in the home. In addition, admissions and discharges to and from the home are appropriate and based on young people's individual needs.

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.