

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10 & 11 August 2015
Unique reference number	SC424280
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 Sutt
Registered manager	Marcel Reid
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	10/08/2015
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	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

SC424280

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are settled in a home where they feel that they belong.
- The staff team are extremely well established and provide consistent care to young people.
- There are very good relationships between young people and staff.
- Young people receive a high level of support and readily accept staff help and support. As a result, they make good progress in a number of areas such as their education and safety.
- Staff manage risks to individuals very well. There is a good balance between reducing risks as much as possible and young people being able to lead a fulfilling life.
- Young people have aspirations for the future and all have goals to work towards their chosen vocation. This prepares them well for when they leave care.
- The home is well managed. Young people are at the centre of all aspects of practice and decisions made.
- There are two shortfalls. One is in relation to risks pertaining to radicalisation and extremism not being fully identified for each young person. The other is in relation to return interviews for young people who have been missing, which are not always independent.

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:

- ensure that staff have 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. This is in particular relation to radicalisation and extremism. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a local authority and is registered for two young people with emotional and /or behavioural difficulties. The aims of the home include the provision of settled care and to work towards the young person returning home where appropriate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
04/07/2014	Full	Good
28/02/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
23/05/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The statement of purpose clearly sets out that the home should provide a safe and caring environment. The actual care delivered is fully in line with this document. The staff provide a very safe, caring and nurturing environment where young people make good progress. Staff know the young people very well and build very high quality, secure relationships with them. This allows good support to be delivered, in relation to a range of issues. No young people have moved in or left the home since the last inspection, reflecting the settled environment. Young people achieve well in their education, according to their starting point, and joint working with school staff maximises progress. Staff work hard to identify barriers to progress and discussions with young people mean they are fully able to express their views about what works and does not work. This leads to barriers to learning being broken down. Staff advocate for young people. A recent educational opportunity was denied to a young person, yet the young person and staff could clearly see that this would of great benefit to them educationally. Staff liaison with the appropriate professionals brought about a change in the decision and the young person engaged and benefitted from the opportunity. Young people feel that staff want them to do well and this encourages them further. All young people have had improved attendance at school this year and have a clear vision of where they wish their education to take them. This clarity of purpose will be of great use to young people when they leave care. There is a clear emphasis on preparation for adulthood and leaving care. Young people enjoy cooking and shopping for themselves and regularly use public transport. They are able to lead a fulfilling life, having access to a wide range of activities and to their friends in the community. Staff are clear that although preparation for independence is a priority, it is also about finding a balance. One member of staff said that they had reminded a young person 'you don't always have to be serious and you can be kid as well'. This staff attitude allows young people to move at their own pace and to experience a gradual and safe transition into adulthood, preparing them well for leaving care. Young people's friends regularly come to see them in the home and say that staff make them feel welcome. In addition, contact with family improves significantly and one professional commented that they had 'seen an improvement already', despite only having been involved with the young person for a short period of time.	

Health issues are given a high priority. One professional commented that there is a 'good balance of healthy food and fitness'. Young people have recently been motivated to keep fit by training for, and participating in, sponsored events for charity. For example, one young person has been involved in a charity bike ride. Staff consider emotional wellbeing as much as they do physical health, to ensure a well-rounded approach. Staff also understand the triggers for a decline in emotional wellbeing for individuals and how this might impact on their behaviour or safety, for example family dynamics that may be stressful. Young people receive very high quality individual support from staff. This allows them to explore their feelings and understand their family situation. This also helps them to understand why they are in care and to find their place in society.

Young people are supervised very well and staff always know if they are feeling vulnerable because they understand their needs. Instances of self-harm are extremely well managed and there are times where these behaviours significantly decline as a direct result of the good support from staff.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff are proactive in their support for young people to prevent risk. They are also responsive and support young people after an event to reduce risks in the future. Risk assessments are seen as ever changing documents because of emerging risks and improvements. The risk assessment process allows young people to take proportionate risks for their learning and to become as safe as possible within their changing situation. Staff training has begun to raise the awareness in the staff team of the risk of extremism and radicalisation. However, risks relating to individuals in relation to this are not yet fully considered. This could affect young people's safety in the future. There are few behavioural incidents in the home because young people learn how to behave in a socially acceptable way. The positive relationships with the established and consistent staff team enable young people to explore and reflect on their own behaviour. As a result, they learn how to self-regulate their behaviour. When young people go missing, risks are minimised because staff make persistent efforts to find them as soon as possible. They worry about young people in this situation, showing young people that they care. A return interview takes place, but	

this is not always conducted by an independent person. Also, despite the managers own evaluation of the information gathered, there is not a formal system to make sure that all relevant information from the interview is fully considered in moving forward. This has not impacted on young people, but has the potential to do so because opportunities for further improvement could be missed.

Staff recruitment is robust and ensures that all regular staff are safe to work with young people. Agency staff have not always been vetted as well as regular staff but the responsible individual quickly put this right when it was identified during the inspection. This shows her proactive and robust approach to safe recruitment and ensures that young people are protected from unsuitable adults.

Multi-agency working helps to protect young people and maximises progress with safety issues. This is because other professionals receive information from staff about young people's safety very quickly in order to make informed and effective decisions. One professional demonstrated this by stating 'they are pro-active in their communication with me'.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager has been registered with Ofsted for two years. He holds a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 in childcare and the Level 5 Diploma in Residential Management. Through his monitoring, he ensures that the home is fulfilling its aims and objectives as identified in the statement of purpose. He always puts young people at the centre of his decisions and meets with them regularly to ascertain their wishes, views and feelings. He responds to young people's views, including any complaints or grumbles and checks if young people are satisfied with the outcome. This gives young people confidence and builds their self-esteem. This is because they know that their views are seen as important. Young people give feedback on staff performance through quality assurance questionnaires and their comments are used to inform staff development. Improving staff performance is a priority. Regular supervision and appraisal ensures that staff are well supported and that their performance is closely monitored. Staff are always supported to perform better and even the highest performers have targets and goals for improvement. One member of staff confirmed this by saying that her supervisor 'pushes her to go higher'. Managers are proactive so that young people's progress continues to improve. For example, they been instrumental in challenging other professionals to ensure that	

young people have received the best service in their education. Also they have ensured that young people receive opportunities that would have been available to them, had they not been in care, such as additional work experience opportunities. In addition, further opportunities for development are considered. For example, young people have been involved in staff recruitment this year. The passion for development is shared by the whole staff team and management report that 'this is the best team I have ever worked with'.

Staff induction and training ensures that the specific needs of individual young people are met. The training includes mandatory courses such as child sexual exploitation, first aid and behaviour management. Where staff have a particular interest, they can complete further training, as long as it benefits young people and is shared with the rest of the team. This motivates staff to further improve young people's lives. One staff has recently undergone some training with the local youth offending team that she plans to cascade to the staff.

The two recommendations made at the last inspection have been met and there have been improvements to risk assessments and records in relation to missing young people. The records now give a clearer picture of what happened and when and the action taken is in line with the risk assessment. This further protects young people's safety.

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 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 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 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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