

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	05/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC424897
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Clover Childcare Services Limited
Registered provider address	Old Rectory Bungalow, Old Rectory Road, Brumstead, Norwich NR12 9EU

Responsible individual	Daniel Knight
Registered manager	Joanne Turner
Inspector	Fiona Littlefield

Inspection date	05/12/2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC424897

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is outstanding because:

- The service delivers consistently excellent care to children with a background of trauma and neglect. The children make progress in all areas of their lives.
- The ethos of the home centres on supporting a child to understand and manage their emotions positively. The staff and managers are nurturing and work to a model of positive parenting.
- The staff provide highly personalised care, which is integrated to include educational and behavioural targets. Children who have not been in education now attend full time with support and make progress in their academic goals. This enhances children's self-esteem. Educational and care staff work together closely to enforce routines around the school day and provide support with learning.
- The children have exceptional opportunities for personal growth through play and sports. They learn to work harmoniously with their peers, take instruction and make relationships. This improves the children's social confidence and ability to cope with less staff support.
- The management oversight is highly effective. There is excellent decision-making and planning for admission. The staff help the children to settle on arrival and move into independence with considerable insight, sensitivity and respect.
- Excellent systems for risk analysis and review support children, monitor their progress and amend goals and strategies as necessary. Plans are specific and timely. The children know when they are doing well, and this enhances their self-esteem
- The staff are energetic, creative and ambitious for the children that they look after. They receive extensive specialist training to deliver a therapeutic service. They work together purposefully. They speak highly of the management team as supportive while driving for further improvement.
- The staff and managers see themselves as part of a team working with the child, alongside parents, educational staff and external professionals. Feedback from agencies is enthusiastic, and they comment on the remarkable progress that the children make and the willingness of the staff to consider new ideas and guidance.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children irrespective of gender who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/01/2016	Full	Outstanding
19/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/01/2015	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children make exceptional progress. Staff know the children's needs and vulnerabilities extremely well and develop affectionate and trusting relationships with the children. Each child has two key workers who support them to achieve goals as part of a highly individual care plan. As one health professional stated, 'Children have learned to survive by avoiding relationships, and staff here help them build those up again by understanding and valuing their needs.' The staff work together to produce a homely environment where children learn to live harmoniously together. The children invite their friends for tea and play group games together on the television. The ethos of the home centres on supporting a child to understand and manage their emotions positively. In practice, this is an extremely complex process whereby the staff work closely with them to reflect on their actions, resolve conflict and build up resilience. Risk assessments and care plans are integrated so that the child and all of the staff focus on achieving consistent targets. The team uses every opportunity to pinpoint any room for improvement. For instance, one child had been challenging to a member of staff, and this led to a discussion with his key worker about what made him angry and how he reacted. He has now engaged in positive sessions with the member of staff that he had confronted. The children learn that they can manage their feelings and this gives them tremendous confidence. One social worker said, 'Staff don't take his behaviour at face value, they work on why he is acting in a certain way and, over time, and it has taken time, he has become calmer.' All children attend school full time. Educational and care staff are exceptionally resourceful. When necessary they have produced individual timetables that allow children to spend some time in mainstream school as well as in a more supported unit. All the children are making progress against their starting points in key areas of English and mathematics. Some children are taking GCSEs in core subjects, while others are exploring a course at a local community college as part of their independence planning. Relationships between the care staff and the school are robust. Care staff support the children with homework and revision and on occasion provide extra assistance in school. This is striking progress given that many of the children have been out of school for several months and had little confidence in their ability to learn The staff and managers take every opportunity to praise a child for an achievement, understanding that it needs to be measured in the context of their starting point. For instance, many children participate in local sports teams. This	

involves physical skill, but also requires them to work as a team, take instruction and improve social interaction. One child was chosen by the local football team to go away for a day trip to Liverpool. He managed this without staff support very well, which is a testament to his progress and greatly enhanced his self-esteem.

The staff encourage the children to develop independence skills from the beginning of their placement. An improved key worker programme links different subjects, including domestic and personal routines, with children's ability to cope and sustain progress. One child is developing his skills in personal and domestic routines. His progress is recorded in an independence passport, which maps out his targets and gradually accumulates evidence of success. Over time he is consolidating this progress and tackling new goals. This has helped him to view the future positively.

The children are encouraged to look after their health needs. The staff provide meals that are balanced and attractive. The children can make menu suggestions. The staff follow clear and rigorous procedures for dispensing medication. When children have asked to stop taking specific medication, they are assisted to discuss this with their doctor. If this is agreed, the staff will support them to withdraw successfully. The staff and managers are assertive in accessing and funding specialist health assessments for children. In one case, the findings contributed extensively to future planning for that child. This is an exceptional example of the child-centred ethos taken by the managers in the home

The staff and managers are very mindful of the importance of maintaining contact with a child's family. The registered manager said, 'In order to benefit they must have a parent who is happy and wants them to succeed. They are likely to go back, so we need to help build relationships.' All children have contact with their families as outlined in their care plans.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The staff and managers place the safety of the children at the centre of their practice. Robust admission procedures and thorough risk assessments underpin a close working relationship between staff and child. The managers follow a detailed process to assess potential referrals as to their suitability. They compile a very comprehensive initial assessment, which identifies initial risks and behaviours and balances these with immediate management strategies. The managers consider the impact of a new arrival on the other children. For instance, a new arrival may trigger a sudden increase of volatile behaviour in other children. The staff are prepared for this and respond as a group	

to reassure and contain anxiety. As a result, children settle quickly. The social worker for one child said, 'He has made so much progress. He has learned to talk about his emotions and staff understand him.'

Risk assessments are extremely comprehensive, covering all aspects of a child's behaviour. The key workers for each child amend the management plan monthly so that it remains up to date. They share this information with colleagues, which leads to a consistent and informed response from all staff when managing challenging behaviour. Up to six months after arrival, the child's key worker presents an updated chronology to the staff team. This is critical in presenting a clear narrative, which subsequently informs the risk assessment and care plan. One external professional said, 'This highly integrated approach make interventions so much more accurate. They know the child's whole story, and in turn, this promotes trust.'

The staff and managers are acutely aware that the children can be vulnerable to negative influences in the community and on the internet. The children are closely supervised, learn to keep themselves safer from dangerous influences and speak to the staff if they feel threatened. This means that they are safe and learn how to protect themselves.

The staff are not risk-averse. The staff encourage the children to invite friends over for tea or visit other children in the community. The staff and managers visit families to check arrangements and share basic information, such as contact details. This is a confident approach that confirms the culture of safe and supportive family-style relationships. The children respond well to this, and it supports future relationships.

The staff and managers place an overriding emphasis on helping the children express and regulate emotions that appear to overwhelm them. The staff consistently use the same techniques, including nurturing or playfulness, to reassure an agitated child and help them deal with any conflict. Consequently, the level of negative incidents, including aggressive behaviour and use of restraint, has declined steadily, both in frequency and levels of severity. The staff use every opportunity to encourage the children to reflect on their actions and understand the consequences. For instance, one child misbehaved while in the car. The sanction was that he could not travel in the car for a week and had to help to clean the car. Running alongside this were therapeutic sessions where he engaged well. The children respond positively to this purposeful approach.

The managers and staff place a high value on maintaining the premises. The home is welcoming, attractive and comfortable as a family home. Any damages are repaired immediately. The children's rooms are highly individual, reflecting their personal tastes and wishes. As a result, they learn to be aware of and take pride in their environment. The management team has completed a very comprehensive local risk assessment, which focuses on all possible risks for the children.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has a master's degree in social work and is due to finish her national vocational degree (NVQ) level 5 in January 2017. She has five years previous experience at managerial level. The vast majority of staff already have the NVQ level 3, with the remaining on the NVQ course and due to finish next year. The management team is thorough when monitoring the quality of care that staff provide. The management balance data about the progress that individual children make with oversight about the behaviour and achievements of the group. A quality assurance manager has been employed to scrutinise compliance between local authority care plans and work being carried out in the home. He also delivers regular audits on casework files and ensures that managerial oversight is robust. The managers take feedback from the children, families and professionals and the staff. This helps to identify areas for development. Following discussions with the staff, the managers employed two teaching assistants to support the children in school, in the place of the care staff. This has proved to be successful and confirms the overall commitment of the staff and the managers to continual improvement. The children who live in the home have extremely complex needs. The staff understand that challenging behaviour can be triggered by past trauma and are patient and empathetic under pressure. The managers have invested considerable time and resources in providing specialist therapeutic training, which enables the staff and the children to work in a highly integrated way to build relationships. The staff benefit from monthly visits by external health professionals. One psychiatrist said, 'It works well because it is practical. Staff are extremely skilled in how they approach this, promoting companionship and understanding. This is evident in outcomes.' The managers have developed a staff team that is ambitious, creative and insightful. The staff receive regular, individual supervision. Some have taken on extra responsibilities for professional development, such as developing the key worker role or direct work with children. Whatever their role, communication is paramount. The staff are clear about their individual responsibilities to update their colleagues and, as a result of this systematic approach, nothing is left to chance. Everyone's talents and skills are appreciated and the staff work as a team, speaking highly of one another and about the commitment of the senior managers. The staff retention is high, and over half of the staff group have worked at the home for over four years. This indicates a long-term commitment. The children	

benefit immensely from being cared for by staff and managers who feel valued themselves.

Outside professionals in both education and health sectors comment that they feel part of a team working to secure positive outcomes for children. A health professional said that staff and managers were, 'Engaged in the whole process to a remarkable degree, looked after by staff who feel safe themselves. They are open to ideas and take guidance.'

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 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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