

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC454294
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Childhood First
Registered person address	Childhood First 210 Borough High Street LONDON SE1 1JX
Responsible individual	Stephen Blunden
Registered manager	Gary John Yexley
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	19/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good 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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This is a good service that has continued to develop since the last inspection. The charitable organisation has implemented changes in its structure since the last inspection. New, senior posts taking the lead for statutory compliance are now in place. These changes show commitment to ensuring the service meets changing statutory compliance requirements.

Young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives. They experience a good standards of care within a therapeutic environment, which reflects their individual needs. Young people are supported by staff who are enthusiastic, caring and knowledgeable about their individual needs and risks.

Relationships between young people and staff are respectful and caring. Staff provide strong foundations of support which they deliver in a safe and stable environment. Young people say, 'This home is ok and staff make life good for us.'

Good safeguarding practices are in place within this home. Young people are closely supervised according to their identified risks and vulnerabilities. Ongoing assessments of risk and need ensure that potentially risky behaviours are identified and managed well.

There is good quality management and a vision to continually improve. Quality assurance is strong, enabling staff to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Monitoring systems are continually being developed to meet changing statutory requirements.

Shortfalls identified at this inspection relate to the current system of recording visitors to the home and the impact this may have on fire safety, and to the need to continue to develop staff knowledge around e-safety.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
16/04/2013	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- review the current signing in and out system to ensure staff in charge know who is in the house at all times, and the impact the current system may have on fire safety procedures (NMS 4)
- provide further training that keeps staff up to date with professional, legal and practice developments; specifically around e safety. (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress while living at the home. They are supported to understand their backgrounds and to develop resilience and a positive self-view. Young people are able to reflect on their pasts in a safe environment with the support of the staff team and the excellent relationships they develop. Individual cultures are observed and young people are respectful towards others. Young people feel valued and see the home as a stable environment.

Young people receive intense therapeutic support through individual and group work. As a result their needs are better understood and their emotional and psychological needs are met. Over time, young people make good progress.

During their placement, young people are supported to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health where possible. All specific health needs are known by staff and access to specialists is facilitated.

Young people benefit from living in a home where education is valued, promoted and encouraged. Their attendance at the organisation's registered school is very good and young people continue to make progress from their starting points. They make a positive contribution within the home as staff promote and encourage open communication about all aspects of living together. Young people say that staff listen and respond to them and their opinions matter. Young people also confirm they are successfully encouraged to attend and contribute to their placement reviews, and to play a part in making decisions about activities, menus and the décor of the home. Regular discussions with key staff enable young people to talk about issues such as bullying and community living. A young person said, 'I am making progress in managing my anger and also my education.'

Young people are readily able to contact families and friends. The staff afford a high priority to supporting family contact arrangements. The home's family support officer is proactive in establishing positive contact for young people. This enables children to maintain and improve family relationships safely and with confidence.

There is an effective process for transition in and moving on, overseen by the placement family support worker who has close contact with local authorities and families. Transitions are smooth and well-planned.

Quality of care **good**

Staff develop very good relationships with young people. Relationships are both constructive and positive, with clear and sensitively managed boundaries. Detailed day-to-day planning provides them with stability, a sense of security and a feeling of being very well cared for.

Young people are able to voice their views and opinions in numerous ways such as daily interaction with staff, key worker meetings and therapeutic community meetings. Any concerns or worries are directed to the community meetings where young people are supported in challenging one another, or staff, and in voicing their feelings if they are not happy about something. For example bullying and house rules. Issues children may be unhappy about are, wherever possible, resolved in this forum. This is in line with the therapeutic model and is seen as a healthy way of enabling young people to overcome concerns with support from the group. Formal processes for making a complaint are in place, with information clearly visible in the home. The young people confirm that staff take all their concerns and complaints seriously, and that managers respond with reasons as to why staff can or cannot make the changes young people may wish for.

Young people make very good progress in education. The value of education is embedded into the therapeutic ethos of the home and staff work hard to ensure young people make good progress and achieve a high level of attendance. The residential team works closely with the organisation's school which is located close by. A sense of community is promoted between both sites. Regular joint meetings occur between the school and home staff, and residential staff are present in the school on a daily basis. Each young person's educational progress is discussed regularly during individual case discussions, key worker meetings and with relevant educational professionals. This results in consistency of care.

A strength of the home is the staffs' recognition and assessment of young people's emotional and psychological needs along with an integrated programme of therapeutic care, treatment and education to address young people's difficulties. Individual psychotherapy sessions are available for young people. Staff receive valuable training to work within the home's therapeutic model. Within this framework, young people develop and make progress.

Young people are encouraged to pursue a variety of activities individually and as a group. They have access to the spacious grounds for outdoor activities. Young people also use local community amenities for activities such as swimming, climbing and the cinema. Current young people choose more house-based activities although staff continue to promote and encourage wider social interaction so they can meet with their peers, develop their social skills and increase their self-esteem.

Young people live in a spacious home which is furnished to a high standard, providing a bright and welcoming family atmosphere. Each young person has personalised their bedroom reflecting their own personality and interests, giving them a sense of identity and belonging. The home is located in a rural setting but near

local amenities.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Good arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect young people. Pro-active safeguarding practice means that all young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Young people say, `I feel safe here, the staff are good people and know how to keep us safe`.

Staff are pro-active in supporting young people's safety and they work in partnership with other agencies in order to facilitate this. Staff receive training on child protection and there is clear guidance in place for them to follow. This ensures they have the awareness and knowledge to promote young people's safety. Good systems are in place for referrals to the child protection agencies. Although staff are watchful in monitoring young people's use of the internet, current staff training does not cover e-safety. Care plans identify each young person's vulnerabilities and associated risks, and include strategies for staff and the young people to follow. Clear risk assessments and management oversight protects young people, while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Regular updating of risk assessments ensures that the young people are continually guided and supported to be safe.

Excellent arrangements are in place for young people who go missing. Staff are aware of the dangers that young people may face when missing, particularly relating to the location of the home. Staff follow local protocols if a young person is missing. There have been no incidents of young people going missing since the last inspection.

Staff work in accordance with the home's therapeutic model and respond to negative behaviours consistently and sensitively. Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. The excellent relationships between staff and young people have resulted in mutual respect and trust. Sanctions are rare and physical interventions are decreasing significantly. When they do occur, staff follow strict procedures that ensure young people's safety is further enhanced. Any physical intervention is only used as a last resort to prevent injury to the young people, others or property.

Young people are protected by the home's robust recruitment procedures which ensure that all necessary background checks are carried out before staff commence employment. Recruitment procedures ensure adults are safe to work with children, that they are of good character and have integrity. Visitors sign in and out at the main office, but not the individual house. This means that staff in charge of the shift may not be aware who is in the house at all times. This system needs to be

reconsidered, not least because it may have an impact on fire safety in the home.

Any incident relating to safeguarding or child protection is promptly notified to the correct agency. Child protection agencies report no concerns about the home's management of such incidents.

All health and safety checks and inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals ensuring the home is a safe environment. This includes checks of firefighting equipment, alarm systems, electrical and gas installations. All young people know what to do in the event of a fire and regular drills ensures this knowledge is embedded in practice.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post for two years, since the service was first registered. He is also the Registered Manager for a sister home, located next to this home. He has the skills and experience to manage this home and is currently working towards completing a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. He holds a MA in psychoanalytic observational studies, which fits in with the ethos of this service.

A strong management team is in place, even when the manager is not there. He is supported by experienced and competent senior managers and a committed and dedicated staff team who place the well-being and the needs of young people at the centre of their practice. The staff team are committed to providing therapeutic care enabling young people to make healthy attachments. A change to the senior staffing structure in the organisation has led to the introduction of dedicated statutory compliance managers. This shows a clear commitment to further develop the service and to building on improvements already made.

There is a full, experienced and permanent staff team and this promotes stability for young people. Staff access good training which enables them to learn and explore matters that are important for the care of the young people. In addition staff receive support and supervision within the therapeutic framework, ensuring they have a thorough understanding of their therapeutic role in working with young people.

There is a clear and up-to-date Statement of Purpose for the home which describes what it intends to achieve and deliver. Additionally, there is a young person's guide which ensures they are aware of what to expect and the support they will receive. These documents enable all relevant individuals to have a clear idea of how the home operates and aids effective placement planning.

Both internal and external monitoring of the home are effective. All documents are monitored and reviewed to identify any themes and patterns that may be impacting on young people's care.

All records are stored safely and securely. They are checked regularly to ensure they are up to date and provide a clear and accurate history of each young person's time at the home. All significant events are reported promptly to all relevant agencies, to ensure the home is accountable in promoting young people's well-being.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. The manager and staff, however, know the home's many strengths and weaknesses and they have the capacity to continually develop and improve the provision and quality of care.

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.