

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC456602
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Advanced Childcare
Registered person address	Advanced Childcare, Pinnacle House, 2 Oakwood Square, Cheadle Royal Business Park, CHEADLE, Cheshire, SK8 3SB
Responsible individual	Mr Ian Raine
Registered manager	Mrs Jeanette Gaunt
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	21/07/2015
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	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC456602

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home has achieved some excellent outcomes for young people. They make sustained progress in relation to their starting points, achieving success in education and training and maintaining good health.
- Staff are aware of how past experience impacts on young people's emotional well-being, and programmes of care reflect this understanding. Young people trust staff to act in their best interests, and have formed positive attachments to them.
- The home manages young people's behaviour well. Use of incentives is effective in shaping positive behaviour and attitude. The use of physical restraint has not been necessary for some time.
- Young people rarely go missing. In general, the home provides a secure environment where young people feel safe, although some aspects of risk assessment are weak. In addition, young people do not always have all the information they need to make a complaint.
- Because of the support of staff, young people have maintained and strengthened their relationships with family members and friends. They develop better self-esteem and confidence and are very well-prepared to move into independence.
- Staff understand the objectives of the home and work consistently as a team in implementing young people's plans. The current absence of the Registered Manager has not impacted significantly on the quality of care. Staff work well with other agencies, challenging appropriately when the quality of service is below what is necessary.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard: In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard with particular reference to providing each child with the complaints policy of their placing authority the registered person must: (2)(d)(ii) ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practical after the child's arrival about how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with.	28 August 2015
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to individualising risk assessments and ensuring that they include risks from mobile phone use the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	28 August 2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/09/2014	Full	Good
26/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
10/12/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people make excellent progress in all areas of their lives. Their attendance at education and training placements is outstanding, and they obtain the qualifications they need to pursue their chosen career paths. Although they are generally in good health, some young people opt to continue with unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as smoking. Nevertheless, staff are persistent in encouraging them to stop, for example, drawing up and following action plans to address this issue. Young people enjoy living here. Staff make their experience as close to ordinary family life as possible, consistent with the overall consideration of keeping them safe. Young people spend much time in the community with their friends, for example, playing football, or just socialising. Staff are very proactive in supporting young people's contact with their families. They work closely with parents to ensure that family relationships, often initially fragile, become stronger and more rewarding. One young person said, 'I am more mature and independent, and because of the staff I have a better relationship with my family.' Staff go out of their way to promote contact for young people who come from a long way away. They transport young people to see family and, where necessary for the sake of safety, stay to supervise. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people and detailed placement plans describe how they will be met in day-to-day care. These plans take into the account the differences in young people's abilities, preferences and vulnerabilities. This ensures that each young person has the maximum opportunity to overcome any barriers to success and fulfil their potential. Staff have a good awareness of how what they do makes a difference to young people. They place particular value on building and maintaining quality relationships with them. This helps young people to form attachments to staff, and value the advice and guidance which staff give them. Frequent key worker sessions give each young person the opportunity to discuss not only issues of concern but also what is going well for them. Placement plans take account of the cultural and ethnic background of young people and how to keep them in touch with their heritage. For example, staff take one young person to shop for particular foodstuffs (including fresh fruit, vegetables and spices) so that they can then cook meals of their choice. Other work is carried out to help young people make sense of their histories, for example, by helping them construct family trees. More generally, one member of staff takes the lead on equality and diversity, choosing a different theme each month. These are	

discussed with young people in a way which gets their attention; the most recent one was on dual heritage and the various forms this can take.

Young people let staff know of their wishes and feelings in daily conversation. Staff respond with interest and concern, acting on what young people want wherever possible but being frank and open when this is not in their best interest. Usually, because of the excellent relationships with staff, young people accept their decisions with no problem. More formal opportunities to express their views, such as young people's meetings, are also in place. The structure of these is kept under review. For example, staff have recently begun to invite young people to part of the staff meeting, so that they can participate directly in the home's decision-making processes.

The home's complaints procedure is easily accessible to young people. When they first arrive, the Children's Guide sets out the different routes they can use to express their views or make a complaint. They are also able to choose whether they want to have an independent advocate. In addition, the home makes available the complaints procedure of the local authority responsible for each young person, although in one case this has been overlooked. Provision of this information is an important extra safeguard, particularly for young people placed a long way from home.

Young people have a clear investment in the home. This is demonstrated by the respect with which they treat staff and the fabric of the building. Interactions between staff and young people are relaxed and affectionate. Staff share in young people's satisfaction at their achievements and provide support when they experience setbacks. One young person said, 'Staff are great, I get on really well with them.' Another was asked if there was anything the home could do better. They replied, 'Yes, by making sure the staff never left. I like the staff and want them all to stay.'

One of the home's strengths is its success in preparing young people to move on. Structured independence programmes enable young people to practise life skills and gradually take on more responsibility. Staff give older young people control of their food budget. They support them in planning menus, shopping for ingredients (which they keep in their own kitchen cupboard) and then preparing the meal. Young people learn other skills such as clothes washing, Hoovering and dusting, and simple household tasks such as wiring a plug. In preparation for entering the world of work, staff help young people complete CVs and role-play job interviews with them. Staff employ 'tough love' in encouraging young people to develop independence, for example, by restricting the number of lifts they can have in the home's car. This approach pays off in helping young people to become more confident and self-reliant. One said, 'I enjoy the independence tasks, I'm much more skilled in stuff like that. I feel massively more confident in what I'll be able to do when I leave the home.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Young people report that they feel safe. There is no bullying, and young people get on well with each other. One said of their relationship with another, 'We're good mates.' Policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding are detailed and well understood by staff. They are aware of how to contact external agencies such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) if they need to. The premises are safe and well-maintained. The home has drawn up a risk assessment of the home's locality, which identifies any risks and how they are controlled. Staff have shown creativity in compiling information packs for young people on topics such as abuse and sexual exploitation. They discuss these in key worker sessions. One member of staff said, 'We got the information from a variety of sources and put it into child-friendly language. The young people really engaged with the work, saying that they learned a lot about the different forms of abuse and the impact it could have.' When a young person may be coming to live at the home, managers use the information provided by the placing authority to assess their impact on the existing group and vice versa. This helps to keep everyone in the home safe and ensure that the home has the resources to meet the young person's needs and promote improvement. Each young person has a detailed risk assessment which takes account of their background, circumstances and behaviour. Separate risk assessments cover e-safety, but these are generic documents and are not individualised to the young person, reducing their effectiveness. In addition, these pay insufficient attention to the risks arising from mobile phone use, and are not always completed promptly when young people are admitted. These shortfalls compromise the safety of young people, particularly those who have previously been at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people rarely go missing. Plans set out the steps to be taken and the timescale within which staff will respond should such an incident occur. These are bespoke to each young person, taking account of their particular level of vulnerability. This means that staff can apply the policy in a reasonable and proportionate way, and give each young person appropriate levels of freedom. As young people develop greater responsibility, staff allow them more unsupervised time out in the community. The good relationships between staff and young people provide the foundation for effective behaviour management. Such rules as exist are clearly understood by young people who largely comply with the reasonable expectations of staff. Plans detail what may trigger each young person's challenging behaviour as well as strategies which work for that individual in containing it safely. Young people sometimes get frustrated and angry, but staff deal with these outbursts calmly and	

effectively. The use of physical restraint is extremely rare.

Staff use a variety of incentives to reward and promote good behaviour. These can be as simple as a trip to a burger bar for a particularly kind act. For example, one young person gave up his own individual time with staff so that they could help a newly-admitted young person settle in. More formal incentives, for example levels of pocket money, are linked to behaviour such as keeping bedrooms tidy. When sanctions are used, they usually take the form of requiring the young person to make reparation. For example, a young person who damaged a door in a fit of temper helped the home's handyman to repair it. This is a constructive outcome which also reinforces the young people's commitment to keeping their home looking good.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager had been absent for over 28 days at the time of the inspection. Senior staff within the team are managing the home effectively in her absence. In addition, the registered provider has made interim management arrangements by allocating a deputy manager from another home to provide support to staff. This deputy manager is experienced and is undertaking the in-house management development programme as well as commencing training leading to the appropriate qualification. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to provide care which is consistent with the local authority care plan and promotes young people's welfare and safety. When the contribution of other services is unsatisfactory or insufficiently prompt, staff are proactive in challenging this. For example, staff are making strenuous efforts to ensure that a young person out of education has a school place at the start of the autumn term. Other professionals confirm that the home makes a significant contribution towards achieving good outcomes for young people. The home is well organised. Records, policies and young people's case files are up to date and completed within timescale. This ensures that staff implement care plans and other work with young people consistently and effectively. Staff have a good understanding of, and are committed to, the home's objectives and values. As a result, they work well together to provide predictability and a sense of security for young people. External monitoring by an independent visitor provides a detailed audit of the home's performance. Monitoring by the Registered Manager and the interim manager makes use of the views of young people, their parents and social	

workers. Both monitoring reports identify areas for development and provide the right foundation for driving improvement.

Staff feel that they have the right skills and knowledge to do a good job for young people. One said, 'We are a confident staff team and do not need day-to-day supervision. Everything that needs to be done gets done. We can see how the progress that young people make is down to our hard work.' Staff receive regular supervision which helps them to reflect on their practice and is focused on young people's outcomes. All staff are either appropriately qualified or working towards it, and have access to regularly refreshed training. The training programme has recently been improved, making more use of external trainers. Staff have valued this, giving them a perspective on different models of practice which they can carry into their work.

The home is maintained to a high standard. Bedrooms are in the process of being updated with more modern furniture and decorated according to the young people's tastes. The bathroom has been completely refurbished, giving a pleasing contemporary feel. This attention to detail and commitment of financial resources is important in conveying to young people that they are valued.

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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