

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC471581
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Albrighton Care Ltd
Registered person address	Newmarket Suite 16, Centrix Keys Business Village Keys Park Road Hednesford Staffordshire WS12 2HA
Responsible individual	Darren John Smallman
Registered manager	Cheryl Kingston
Date of last inspection	01/07/2014

Inspection date	23/02/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

In September 2014, the first child placed here after the home's registration moved on in a well-planned way. His needs were re-assessed during 2014 at the instigation of the professional and staff team around him. As a result, a community home was no longer considered appropriate. Staff here gave good support that prepared the child well for his move. For example, he chose things for his new bedroom. He also had a small leaving party at his old school with a few friends, staff from the home and school. He was well supported on introductory visits to the new placement and said when he was leaving, 'I don't like this home now - I like my new home now.'

A young person with complex learning disabilities and behaviour moved into the home at the beginning of 2015, following an extended introductory phase. Staff worked well with relatives and stakeholder advice to provide a smooth transition from the care of relatives. Relatives see the young person both at their home and here. They say, 'this is the best possible care and support: the smiles show the trust he has in the staff.' However, the location of the home is not so conveniently placed for relatives as a newly registered home within the same organisation. It is planned that the existing staff group work with the young person on an ongoing basis to ensure consistency of care. Nevertheless, the plan for him to move again to the newly registered home has not been explored fully enough by the home and all stakeholders.

The quality of care and ethos of the home have improved because the Registered Manager has learnt lessons from the home's first placement. In particular, the manager has developed a more compassionate, nurturing approach to behaviour management, which considers the impact of children's experiences as well as their learning disabilities. She said, 'I have more knowledge about attachment disorders and I have learnt to be more analytical of things. I am more pushy for therapy and advocacy: I think 'child', not 'adult', all the time.' The manager could not retain the

staff group when the first child left because the home was without a placement for a few months. However, she has safely recruited and trained new staff, some of whom have child care qualifications and prior knowledge of the new young person placed. All staff are on probationary periods and do not yet have substantial experience in the home. This breaches the minimum standard, but is not having any obvious impact on the quality of care provided.

The recently recruited new staff group have received good quality training tailored specifically towards the needs of the new child in placement. This focuses on providing a secure emotional base, where staff are compassionate and available to young people, with a deep commitment to understanding their individual needs. Good quality care has enabled the young person to settle well and he is also exhibiting improved behaviour in school. For example, staff are carefully reviewing incidents and behaviour management strategies, so that they learn what works best to promote his social skills and behaviour. They ensure that he is not kept waiting unnecessarily as this confuses and agitates him. They know the young person's favourite things and routines. They make it easy for him to relax and feel safe. They are using certificates to reward the young person for every achievement. However, they are writing words on these which are too hard for him to understand, reducing the impact of the reward.

The Registered Manager has developed her monitoring and reviewing processes and takes heed of the points raised in inspections. She has simplified her development planning for the home to ensure that identified development points are addressed speedily and that the home is safe and well maintained. She works openly with relatives, school, social workers and independent reviewing officers, sharing progress reports and occasionally raising care practice issues and questions with them. However, the contribution of the monthly visitor's reports to monitoring and developing the home is reduced because young people are not consistently seen or their views sought. Relatives and staff are not interviewed by the visitor in order to form a view about the quality of safeguarding and welfare in the home.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a small limited company and can accommodate and provide care for up to two children and young people with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/07/2014	Full	adequate

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
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent monthly visitor interviews such children, relatives and staff as appears necessary in order to form an opinion about how well children are safeguarded and their wellbeing promoted. (Regulation 33 (8))	25/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times, have substantial experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their probationary periods (NMS 17.5)
- ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way that is helpful to them. This specifically relates to using written words and symbols that children can understand on reward certificates and records shared with directly with them (NMS 22.5)

- ensure that the home contributes effectively to reviews of young people's care plans. This is with specific regard to the appropriateness or otherwise of plans to move a young person between homes in the organisation.
(NMS 25.3)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.