

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	27/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC471581
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Albrighton Care Limited
Registered provider address	Watling Court Orbital Plaza, Watling Street, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0EL

Responsible individual	Darren Smallman
Registered manager	Isobel Green
Inspector	Rachel Britten

Inspection date	27/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. One young person has lived here for almost a year. He continues to make good progress and feels very at home. His mother is highly satisfied with the quality of his care. His social worker said, 'Management and care staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge and skill base. They provide my young person with an "autism specific environment" that supports his needs and allows him to feel safe and reassured.' Since the last inspection in July 2016, staff and the manager have worked well with education providers. For example, staff helped to prepare the young person for a new school by inviting his new class teacher and the school's behaviour specialist to meet him at the home before the term started. Staff also showed the young person a booklet about the school. Staff's careful preparation helped him to recognise faces and cope with the change of going to a new school. Equally, staff's preparation work helped the school's staff to understand the young person's individual needs, likes and dislikes. Managers and staff also work closely with the young person's mother and health professionals. Staff and the young person's mother consult together regularly to advocate for the advice and help that the young person needs with his emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff now have advice and input from a dietician, learning disability nurse and psychologist. Staff keep daily logs of the young person's food consumption for the dietician and of his emotions for the psychologist. However, staff and managers are not reviewing these records themselves to gain messages, patterns or insights for their own practice. Similarly, staff keep records of their meetings with the young person's mother and social worker, but they have not written these records very clearly or set out any actions arising so that staff are easily reminded of them. This minor shortfall has little adverse impact on the young person's progress, but it means that staff are likely to be less proactive and slower to adapt their practice. The young person is making good progress in his social and emotional development. This is because staff work insightfully and sensitively with him, encouraging improved social interactions with adults and peers. Staff provide clear	

guidance and structure to each day, helping him to understand what is happening and what he should do. They reward and encourage acceptable behaviour. The young person chooses outings and activities that satisfy his interests, but staff use these to help improve his awareness of others. For example, he enjoys a local trampoline centre and staff take him there regularly. Staff are teaching him to look around as he bounces, to make sure that he gives other people a safe and appropriate amount of personal space.

Staff continuously work on developing the young person's ability to hold two-way conversations. Staff help him to learn to listen to replies and respond accordingly, rather than dictate exchanges with set and repetitive phrases of his own. For example, staff have successfully taught him that he can save discussions about his activities for his young person's meeting. Similarly, they have successfully taught him that he can only be in charge of giving staff driving directions when staff have given him the 'satnav master card'.

The young person is making good progress with his independence. Staff use achievable targets, points and rewards to encourage this. For example, he can apply his skin creams, put his laundry into the washing machine, get washed and dressed, clean his teeth, clean out the fish tank and help change his bedsheets. Staff are working with him on shopping for a small number of items, working out what coins are needed, speaking appropriately to the cashier and waiting for any change.

Staff undertake key work sessions with the young person when he is relaxed and can concentrate best. They plan sessions carefully according to what they want him to learn and understand. Afterwards, staff test out what he has learned through simple quizzes and questions. They are alert to any evidence of progress and they diligently keep records of all aspects of their work. However, some of their records are unclear, with too little evaluation of what staff practice works well and less well.

Staff and the manager are not making best use of internal and external monitoring to improve their practice and maximise the young person's progress. For example, they have done little work to help prepare the young person for sharing his home with a second new arrival. They have not prepared any impact risk assessment to help them match a second young person with the current young person. The home's monthly independent visitor recommended these pieces of work. Staff once invited the young person's peers over from the organisation's other home. Their aim was to introduce him to the idea of sharing his space. Staff decided to do a baking activity with the three young people. This was a poor activity choice given this young person's preoccupation with food. As a result, the occasion did not go well. Staff have not planned any further efforts to help the young person to move towards sharing his home. Neither have they recorded a reason for putting this work on hold.

Managers do not review records with enough critical analysis of what went well and

what went less well. They are sometimes not as proactive as they could be. For example, they have not made any changes to their approach on security in the home. This is despite a recommendation at the last inspection to review the arrangements. At night, they still electronically lock an internal door that blocks access to the front door. Staff lock the internal kitchen door at night and they keep all kitchen knives locked away at all times. The safeguarding rationale for these practices has not been kept under regular review and there is no record of why they are necessary in the light of this young person's behaviour.

Overall, this young person is still making good progress, thanks to his positive and strong relationships with staff team members who do not change too often. He no longer needs a 'now and next' board because he has shown that he can communicate and understand an activity planner. He is able to take part in his young person's meeting and is better able to wait for his turn to speak instead of dominating conversations himself. He is starting to understand how he is feeling and can sometimes say if he has had a 'difficult day' or feels tired. He is more willing to go for walks and take exercise. His mum said, 'His needs are met to an exceptional level.'

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 who have learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/07/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Not judged
14/12/2015	Interim	Not judged
23/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises. Ensure that any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home, is necessary and proportionate, is kept under review and, if necessary, revised and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (c))	30/04/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Ensure that the registered person makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under Regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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