

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC476289
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Mark Easie
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC476289

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is providing good, and in some respects an outstanding, service to children and young people.
- The vast majority of children and young people speak extremely positively about their experiences of living in the home. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff, who are very nurturing and who have a genuine attachment to those they care for.
- Staff, in consultation with expert in-house therapists, provide very good support to children and young people who have suffered significant trauma and have complex emotional difficulties. They are insightful. Alongside providing children and young people with structure and predictable care, they provide them with high levels of praise, encouragement and emotional warmth.
- Children and young people are completely at the centre of all work taking place. Their views contribute to the running of the home. They are fully involved in the preparation and review of their own care plans and their behaviour and risk management plans.
- Comprehensive behaviour and risk management plans underpin safe practice.
- Staff are driven by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and motivated manager. He is very child-focused and has high aspirations for children and young people. Staff feel valued and share the manager's vision to improve the life chances of children and young people.
- One documentary shortfall and two areas for improvement are identified as a result of this inspection. These are in relation to recruitment practices and the detail included in the home's statement of purpose. These are matters which are not having an impact on the safety and well-being of children and young people.

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
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which include all information and documentation listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child, with particular reference to up-to-date copies of any plan for the child prepared by the child's placing authority. (Regulation 36 (10(a)))	18/12/2015

Recommendations

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

- Review and amend the statement of purpose, indicating how the home provides individualised care, with particular reference to specialist services provided, specialist training undertaken by staff, and how staff are trained in restraint. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice in respect of recruitment, with reference to clearer recording of how gaps in employment have been checked and the reasons for such gaps. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides long-term care and therapy for up to five children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The registered provider is a private company, operating a range of children's homes across the country.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2015	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children's and young people's experiences and overall progress are good, and in some cases exceptional. A young person said: 'I would grade this home 10 out of 10.' A parent commented: 'Overall, the care has been amazing. My daughter is doing better than I could have anticipated. Her whole life has changed for the better. She is living rather than existing and she now has a brilliant future to look forward to.' Children and young people develop in all aspects of their lives. Consequently, their life experiences and chances are significantly enhanced. Children and young people enjoy positive and trusting relationships with extremely committed and caring staff, who know them and understand their needs very well. Observations of staff demonstrate that they are very nurturing, encouraging and supportive. A young person said: 'The adults here are really nice. They care about us a lot and do the best for us. They are really good, forgiving and helpful. They are really understanding when I am struggling or when I have done something wrong.' The positive relationships children and young people have with a consistent team of skilled and committed staff help to provide a solid foundation from where they can develop in all areas of their life. Children and young people make good, and in some cases excellent, educational progress. A young person said: 'I could hardly read when I came and now I can read a thick book.' Another commented: 'I have just got into mainstream school and it is really good. I am doing brilliantly. I have got new friends and I have joined some after-school clubs. I am working hard as I want to join the police force in the future.' The manager also recently arranged for the company's architect to visit a young person who is interested in pursuing this as a career in the future. This inspired and motivated the young person to improve his school attendance and work towards his goal. As a result of educational progress, children's and young people's choices and opportunities in adulthood are greatly enhanced. Children's and young people's emotional and behavioural development is enhanced while living in this home. Coordinated work undertaken with them by the staff and therapists helps them to understand and start to come to terms with their traumatic histories and experiences. A parent said: 'My daughter's understanding of her difficulties has really progressed. It is brilliant and I cannot thank the staff enough for what they have done.' The help and support received has a positive impact on children's and young people's emotional well-being and ability to understand and develop appropriate relationships with others.	

Children's and young people's views are central to the running of the home. Their views are consistently sought through weekly children's chat meetings, through one-to-one placement plan sessions and through feedback questionnaires regarding the quality of their care. A young person said: 'The adults are good at listening to us. We all decided together what to do with the music room and we chose what went in it.' Another said: 'The staff are epic; they listen to me and they explain why if I can't do something.' Children and young people are also fully involved in the preparation and review of their care plans and behaviour and risk management plans. All documents are then produced in a child-friendly format and placed in children's and young people's child-friendly case files. As a result, children and young people feel valued and are motivated to work towards the goals which they wish to achieve.

Staff ensure that children and young people have access to a wide range of activities and new and exciting experiences which reflect their individual preferences and interests. A young person said: 'We get to go on trips to Drayton Manor and the farm and I have been on holiday to Butlin's. I go to swimming lessons and to the Boy's Brigade and next week I am starting guitar lessons.' By engaging in their chosen activities, children and young people make good progress emotionally, physically, and socially. They keep fit and have fun. They socialise, become part of, and make a positive contribution to, their community.

Relationships between children and young people and their families are supported if this is safe and appropriate. Practical and emotional help is provided to facilitate contact, regardless of the fact that some children and young people are placed a significant distance from home. In addition, life story work undertaken with all children and young people is of great assistance. Those who arrive at the home with very low self-esteem and a very poor sense of identity, having been removed from their birth families, develop an understanding of their background. They are supported to feel proud of who they are. Consequently, their sense of identity and self-esteem improves.

The home is warm and welcoming. Photographs of children and young people around the home serve as a reminder of good times, experiences and achievements. Children and young people are involved in choosing the furniture and décor of the home. They personalise their bedrooms in a style which reflects their personal preferences. Such involvement helps children and young people to develop a sense of pride in the environment they have helped to create and it makes it feel more like a family home. A young person said: 'This is just a lovely place that I am happy to call my home.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people say they feel safe and parents and social workers report that they are safe living in this home. A young person said: 'This is a safe place to live. There is nothing dangerous here. Staff help me to understand danger and how to keep myself safe. I can trust them and talk to them about any worries I have.' An emotionally safe and secure environment provides children and young people with a strong sense of safety and well-being. Bullying is not tolerated in the home. Work undertaken with children and young people regarding all aspects of relationships helps them to develop mutual respect for one another. A young person commented: 'We get marbles when we are kind to each other. We are learning to work as a team and look after each other. We have been on holiday together and it was one of the best holidays I have ever had.' This provides children and young people with a higher level of safety in the home. Children and young people are helped and protected as a result of staff knowing them very well and the implementation of comprehensive individual behaviour and risk management plans. Staff and therapists engage children and young people in targeted work specific to their individual difficulties and vulnerabilities. For example, some have been helped and supported in relation to past emotional trauma, self-harming behaviours, attachment difficulties, aggression and violence, and sexualised behaviours. Levels of challenging and risky behaviours are kept under close review at fortnightly multi-agency 'team around the child' meetings. This ensures that children and young people are safeguarded and that they continue to receive the most appropriate help to meet their individual needs. As a result of excellent coordinated packages of support, from their starting points, incidents of risky behaviours significantly reduce. Despite some children and young people having a history of going missing, incidents of this are extremely rare. Since the last inspection there has only been one incident involving one young person. On this occasion, he was swiftly located and welcomed back into the home. The positive relationships children and young people have with staff and detailed individualised missing from care risk assessments have provided a good level of protection in this area. Children's and young people's behaviour is well managed. Positive relationships, high levels of praise, and clear and consistent boundaries have a positive effect in reducing challenging behaviours. A young person said: 'The staff are very fair. If we do things well, we get rewards of our choice and if we do things wrong I know what the consequences will be.' Physical interventions are used appropriately and proportionately. Debriefs for staff, children and young people are completed after every incident. The manager, in consultation with the therapy team, analyses and	

monitors all incidents to establish any patterns and trends and whether individual behaviour strategies need to be amended. As a result, the number of physical interventions in the home has continued to decrease.

The company's recruitment and selection procedures are sufficient to help ensure that only those who are suitable to work with children and young people and do not pose a risk to their safety are employed. Appropriate information is sought from new employees and appropriate checks are undertaken. Practice could be improved, however, by clearly recording the reasons why new employees have had gaps in employment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He is committed, enthusiastic and extremely child-centred. He is held in high regard by children and young people, the staff team and other professionals. A young person said: 'The manager is brilliant.' Another said: 'He really listens and sorts out any complaints I have got.' Since moving to work at the home just over a year ago, he has had a very positive impact on the home. A member of staff said: 'The manager is fantastic. We were going through a bad patch before he came. He has brought enthusiasm and stability to the home. He has provided the leadership that was needed to motivate the staff team and rebuild morale.' Staff are committed and passionate. They share the manager's vision of improving the lives of children and young people. As a result, a cohesive staff team ensures that children and young people are consistently well supported. Staff are well trained. An improved induction programme, tailored specifically for the home rather than the company, is comprehensive. Staff continue to receive refresher training in key areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, and physical restraint. They also undertake more specialised training in respect of issues which affect the children and young people they are caring for. For example, staff have undertaken training in relation to missing from care, trauma, clinical interventions, self-harm, self-soothing, dissociation and dyadic psychotherapy. Additionally, staff have access to the in-house therapy team to discuss children's and young people's specific emotional and behavioural needs. As a consequence of the good quality training and support provided to staff, children and young people benefit from care being provided to them by skilled staff who are equipped to meet their specific complex needs. Staff knowledge and development are also promoted through attending regular and productive team meetings, as a result of receiving regular formal supervision	

with a manager, and group supervisions facilitated by the therapy team. This provides staff members with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and on the needs of the children and young people they are caring for. It also ensures that practice in the home is closely monitored. This provides scope for staff development and further improvements in the delivery of care.

The home's statement of purpose provides parents and placing authorities with information about how children and young people will be helped and supported while living in the home. However, additional information, for example, in relation to the life story work the home provides, the specialist training which staff undertake, and more detail in relation to how staff are trained in restraint, would more clearly demonstrate the uniqueness and expertise of the home. Children and young people are provided with excellent information about the home via individually written young people's guides. These are put together specifically for each child or young person, taking into account the age, level of understanding and particular needs.

The home has excellent systems to monitor the progress children and young people make. Daily risk assessment reports, weekly therapy meetings, fortnightly multidisciplinary 'team around the child' meetings and data collected in respect of all significant incidents which arise in the home enable the manager and therapy team to analyse patterns and trends in behaviours. This ensures that care plans and behaviour and risk management plans remain effective and that changes are instigated to improve the quality and effectiveness of these plans. The manager is thus able to demonstrate very clearly how much progress children and young people are making and what impact living in the home is having on their lives. Children and young people having their own version of their care file, the use of life story books, and photo albums also enable children and young people to see the progress they are making for themselves.

Children's and young people's case files hold lots of information and evidence of some excellent work being undertaken. The home's care plans are comprehensive and provide a coherent picture of the care being provided. However, some case files do not contain up-to-date local authority care plans or personal education plans. As a result, although the manager has chased the local authority for these documents, some children's and young people's case records are incomplete. Not having all relevant and up-to-date local authority plans prevents care and interventions being informed by each child's or young person's relevant local authority plan.

Quality assurance monitoring, both internally and externally, is effective in identifying strengths in the home as well as minor shortfalls. Both systems provide for regular consultation with children and young people and professionals. As a result, the quality of the service continues to be assessed and analysed in order to drive improvements.

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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