

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC393940
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Emma Donnelly
Inspector	Fiona Littlefield

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC393940

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make progress in all areas of their development. Staff are skilled and creative and provide highly personalised and individual care. They know the young people well and speak fondly of them.
- Parents and external agencies have confidence in the care provided. They praise the relationships between staff and young people. Parents feel supported and their views are included in all aspects of care.
- Staff value family relationships and will go the extra mile to promote contact. Young people benefit from sustaining these contacts and feel safe and reassured by staff who support regular arrangements.
- Staff work as a team to ensure that young people are safe and to promote positive behaviour. They are empathetic about young people and apply rules and guidelines sensitively and consistently. As a result, incidents of negative behaviour are reducing.
- The management team is committed and passionate about the service the home provides. They are very focussed on outcomes for young people and are ambitious for them, wanting them to have a full and productive lives that prepare them for adulthood.
- This inspection has identified a shortfall in relation to supervision which needs to be provided consistently in line with the home's statement of purpose. This is not currently having an impact on the safety and well-being of young people.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the registered person has systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned residential service for up to five young people with a diagnosed learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/05/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/01/2015	Full	Outstanding
12/06/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/01/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people benefit from close and trusting relationships with staff who encourage them to try new experiences. Some young people who have not been able to tolerate being in a crowd have gone to outside activities such as attending the Christmas panto or an event at the O2 arena. One member of staff said: 'We build on activities. I suggested using a trampoline. This young person knew me and we agreed that if she didn't like it we would go. She wasn't sure but came and she tried it.' This is exceptional progress given their starting points.</p> <p>Education is a key indicator of the progress that young people make. Some young people have been on the point of exclusion, while others were being educated in a solitary setting because of their challenging behaviour. Staff have worked purposefully to redress this situation, providing intensive support for young people in school. As they start to settle and improve, staff withdraw but remain available to ensure that progress is sustained. The turnaround can be remarkable. Young people learn to cope with the day and this is reflected in academic results in subjects such as English and Mathematics. They learn to control their behaviour and their sense of self-esteem improves.</p> <p>This is particularly important when planning for the future. One young person who has recently moved on from the home and is now attending a local college. She wrote: 'I cannot thank you enough. I don't know where I would be if it weren't for the amount of time, effort and money that you have put into me. You have made me the person I am today.'</p> <p>Staff and managers take a holistic approach to the care of young people. For example, many have complex health needs and these require scrupulous attention. Staff work closely with families and external consultants to ensure that young people get the attention they require. Some young people now sleep until morning after a history of broken nights. Others have been assisted to reduce some medication which has resulted in a brighter, more animated demeanour. In addition young people are supported to access services such as opticians and doctors for regular check-ups. This is encouraging given their starting points and has greatly enhanced their self-esteem.</p> <p>Young people greatly benefit from positive contact with their families. Staff and managers appreciate this and go to considerable lengths to support arrangements and build up confidence. The social worker for one family said: 'They are really</p>	

exceptional at this and as a result, the family are much more sure that they can cope. That is really going the extra mile.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are protected by staff and managers who develop robust and detailed assessments of their needs which are consistently applied and reviewed regularly. Many of the young people have complex behaviours and little awareness of danger. Consequently staff and managers have to provide a safe environment for them.</p> <p>Excellent admission procedures ensure that staff and managers understand a young person's background and history. They identify risks, including any triggers for challenging behaviour and match them with management strategies. Staff also liaise with previous placements, schools and families to develop a comprehensive idea of a young person's emotional and behavioural milestones. As a result of this core activity, staff and managers know how to safeguard them.</p> <p>Staff make every effort to help a young person settle into their new surroundings. Some young people are able to visit the home in advance of moving in or staff may visit them in their placements so that they become familiar faces. Parents regularly visit the home in advance and meet staff. The teacher of one new arrival said: 'They have been keen to be involved in any planning. They communicate well and want to resolve any issues. They work as a team with us.'</p> <p>There are rigorous arrangements in the home to ensure that the environment is secure and that all young people are supervised at all times. Staff and managers are aware of both the possibilities and dangers of the internet and supervise the use of new media. At the same time, staff and managers want young people to have new experiences and access the community safely. One young person was assessed as being at risk while using transport as a consequence of her challenging behaviour. Staff worked patiently with her and within weeks she was able to tolerate someone sitting next to her in the car. Consequently she is now able to access the community more frequently and easily. This has greatly expanded her horizons.</p> <p>Young people make progress because they work with staff who all understand their needs and vulnerabilities. Each young person has an individual daily routine which is planned round the school day and which they know well. Staff apply routines consistently and there is an emphasis on positive reinforcement and</p>	

encouraging them to take personal responsibility. Young people respond well to this systematic approach and their behaviour improves.

However, on occasion, young people can still be confrontational and defiant. Staff and managers are very skilled in trying to help deescalate a situation and there is an emphasis on using distraction techniques to alleviate tension. All incidents involving restraint are reviewed by the management team to identify triggers for negative incidents and adjust strategies accordingly.

Staff and managers also benefit from regular consultations with a child and adolescent psychiatrist. These help staff develop a more comprehensive understanding of relationships and the impact of trauma on the complex needs of the young people they are looking after. One young person spent extra time with his key worker and was able to describe his sense of bereavement following his separation from his family. His key worker agreed to liaise with his social worker and try to sort out arrangements that might support him better. As a result, incidents of negative behaviour are much reduced.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>A strong and committed management team provide robust direction for staff. The registered manager and deputy are both appropriately qualified and have significant experience in working with young people with complex needs. Managers have a high regard for professional development and staff are either already qualified in working with young people or committed to professional training.</p> <p>Managers have addressed all of the the shortfalls raised in the last inspection. There have not been any notifiable events but staff are aware of the process and confident that they would respond in a timely fashion. Managers have strengthened admission procedures and only consider referrals which meet the criteria for the home as set out in the statement of purpose. Staff are mindful that young people can find change traumatic and work carefully to ensure that young people are prepared positively and can start to adjust to their new surroundings</p> <p>Staff and managers have a dynamic approach to improving the service by adjusting training to meet the specific needs of the young people. The emphasis is on team work and ensuring good communication so that all young people can express their views. For instance, some young people have a visual impairment. The registered manager is teaching staff to sign and they have made links with nationally based organisations who have provided further expertise. This has helped them make full use of specialist equipment provided by the young persons'</p>	

family.

Young people express both pleasure and pain, exhilaration and a sense of humour. After some weeks, one young person who is non-verbal was able to tell staff that he had a headache. They felt that this was a break-through in being able to make him more comfortable. During the inspection, one young person arrived back in the home laughing as she had raced her key worker back from the local shops. Young people learn to express themselves in this relaxed atmosphere.

Managers place the interests of young people at the centre of their practice. Young people record their views either with the assistance of staff or using a range of audio and visual aids. They contribute to day-to-day decisions in the home as well as to their care plans. Managers reflect on any issues in monthly monitoring reports. The management team responds positively to robust and challenging external monitoring seeing it as an opportunity for growth and development. Consequently young people benefit from an environment that is constantly improving.

The management team balance a young person's educational and behavioural goals with the need for enjoyment. The registered manager said: 'We want them to be safe and secure but also to have fun. We never give up.' Young people have access to a range of resources in the community, including youth clubs and theatre groups. In addition staff are skilled in supporting young people to use local shops where they learn to ask for various items and handle money under supervision. Staff are using the opportunity to develop their sense and purpose which leads to enhanced confidence in the future.

Staff speak highly of how the management team provides support and direction. They benefit from daily handovers and weekly team meetings where they discuss each young person in depth. Staff feel confident that they will be prepared for any eventuality when they start work for the day. The social worker for one young person said: 'Their strength is that each member of staff knows each young person really well. They know what they are doing and are confident.' Young people benefit from this comprehensive approach.

All staff have had their appraisals for the year. However, they have not been receiving regular supervision as outlined in the homes statement of purpose. While this has not had an impact on the care of young people directly, staff have not had the opportunity to reflect regularly on their practice in an individual sense. The management team are addressing this as a matter of urgency.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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