

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC375540
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann-Marie Born
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Registered person address</b>	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Riverside House Main Street ROTHERHAM South Yorkshire S60 1AE
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Clair Pyper
<b>Registered manager</b>	Karen Kennedy
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11/02/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	23/09/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>adequate</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>adequate</b>
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Young people's individual and diverse needs and vulnerabilities are comprehensively assessed and well met in their day-to-day care planning. As a result young people are achieving good outcomes in many aspects of their lives, in particular re-building positive relationships with family members, health and education. A relative said, 'he has made enormous progress since he has been here. He will listen to staff here. They are brilliant with him and with me. I've got no complaints about them at all because of the way they are with him and they listen.'

Young people are universally positive about the care they receive. They recognise and acknowledge that staff genuinely care about them and are aspirational for them to achieve to the best of their ability. As a result young people's sense of belonging increases as their self-esteem, self-confidence and feelings of self-worth improve. A young person said, 'I want to stay in the home until I'm 18 because then I can feel like I've got a home and this is my home now.'

The experienced and nurturing staff team provide a caring home and are good role models for young people. This consistent approach encourages young people to behave positively and reflect on any negative behaviours. As a result, for the majority of the time young people and staff enjoy positive, caring and trusting relationships. A staff member said, 'We make their home their home so that they do

feel safe and want to be here. Like children that have left come back here for their Sunday dinner quite often and they'll come and tell us how they are doing. You would always go back to your mum and dad's wouldn't you? We are their mum and dad's while they're here and so we always keep the door open for them.'

A young person stated, 'I'm glad I'm here, I am safe and I am happy' and a relative said, 'I trust them to protect him.' The proactive manager and staff team do all they can to ensure young people are safe. Notwithstanding this there have been high incidences of missing episodes. Robust partnership arrangements with local agencies, including the police, and the home's 'disruption techniques' work to prevent young people absenting themselves and the numbers of missing episodes are reducing as young people settle in to the home.

The experienced and committed manager is well aware that some auditing processes have 'slipped' since the last inspection. Staff vacancies have made an impact on the amount of time she has been able to spend on relevant monitoring processes. The manager is aware of these shortfalls and has taken action to address them. These omissions have not had a detrimental effect on young people's care due to the staff team's commitment. Nevertheless, there are areas for development. These include improving the quality of monitoring processes to ensure that young people's views are included and that all significant events are appropriately recorded; that Ofsted are notified of all significant events in line with legislation; that young people communicate their views on all aspects of their care; that the quality of recording following a missing episode improves and that appropriate holiday arrangements ensure that the manager and deputy manager are not both absent at the same time.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of either gender. The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties on a long-term basis.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
29/08/2013	Full	good
07/02/2013	Interim	good progress
25/10/2012	Full	good

### 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
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table, in particular Ofsted (Regulation 30 (1))	07/11/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person's system for monitoring the matters set out in schedule 6 improves the quality of care provided in the home, in particular ensuring that all significant incidents are appropriately recorded (Regulation 34 (1)(b))	07/11/2014
34	ensure that the registered person's system for	07/11/2014

(2001)	monitoring referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	
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## Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support, in particular following a restraint, their return from any missing episode or their response to any complaint made (NMS 1.3)
- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by the staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away and any action taken in light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure that clear arrangements are in place to ensure appropriate management of the home when the registered manager is absent, in particular, making appropriate holiday arrangements (NMS 21.4)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in developing an understanding of their backgrounds. The resultant growth in self-confidence and self-esteem enables them to form positive sustainable attachments with staff. Young people who have moved on in to independence or semi-independent living come back to the home for 'Sunday dinners' such are the positive attachments they have with staff. Some young people also describe each other as friends providing them with positive peer support in their home. Young people are empowered to recognise their positive attributes and build necessary social and life skills.

Young people's health improves during their time in the home. They understand the need to engage in a healthy lifestyle as a result of the consistent positive health messages they receive from staff. Some young people still smoke cigarettes and cannabis. However, young people are beginning to develop an understanding of the negative impact this has on all aspects of their health, including emotional and psychological development, and are reducing their intake. A young person commented, 'I'm not using as much cannabis as I was and that's helped with cutting my anger back.'

Young people's attendance and achievement at school is much improved since they have been in the home. All young people are engaged in education and have aspiration for their futures, whether it be to work with animals, join the army or go on to further education. For some young people this growth in confidence in their academic abilities and self-esteem is a dramatic improvement. They take real pride in their achievements which for most is a new and exciting feeling. A social worker stated, 'She hadn't been at school for two years before coming in to care. School said that she's brilliant while she's there.'

Young people are provided with opportunities to make a positive contribution to their home in a variety of ways. They have chosen new furnishings and decoration and are part of the informal interview panels for new members of staff. In addition, young people have jointly assumed the care of a stray cat together with staff. The cat is now thriving under their ministrations. Consequently young people learn how to negotiate and take responsibility not just for themselves but for others.

Young people further benefit from the staff's consistent approach to addressing any racist language or behaviours. As a result young people understand different cultures and religions and the impact intolerance can have on others. A young person said, 'they are all very accepting here and so I am learning to be as well.'

Young people fully benefit from not only sustaining positive relationships with relatives but also regaining contact with estranged family members. Consequently,

young people develop a fuller understanding of their cultural heritage and backgrounds and build important familial bonds which support them now and in their future independent lives. Young people's sense of self and belonging are much enhanced resulting in a growth in self-esteem. A young person said, 'I think I've made loads of progress because I'm going to school and I'm able to stay at my mum's and so I've got the best of both worlds.'

Young people benefit from individual transition planning which incorporates all aspects of their diverse needs. Consequently young people learn independence skills at a pace appropriate to them, for example budgeting, shopping or using public transport. This improves young people's opportunities for success giving them the confidence to move on to the next stage in their independence plan.

### **Quality of care**

**good**

Robust behaviour management plans are consistently followed by the patient and nurturing staff team. As a result, for the majority of the time young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and each other and behave appropriately. Issues between young people are addressed sensitively allowing them to talk through conflicts in a restorative manner. Consequently, young people's tolerance levels increase, they learn negotiation skills and how to sustain relationships. A young person said, 'I fell out with (name) and I even had a fight with him on Saturday but we sat down with staff, talked it through, shook hands and then went swimming together on Sunday.'

Young people use the range of opportunities provided to them by the receptive staff team to share their wishes and feelings. Consequently young people feel listened to and that their views are valuable. This effectively enhances self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Young people understand and use the complaints system. Staff use lessons learnt from complaints to improve the quality of care young people receive. For example, suggestions from young people on how to improve admissions to the home. However, at present there is no formal system for ascertaining whether or not young people are satisfied with the response to their complaint.

Robust assessments detail all aspects of young people's diverse and cultural needs, including any risks of sexual exploitation or going missing. The committed staff team follow detailed care plans which specify how young people's needs are to be addressed and met. Young people are involved in all aspects of their care planning hence they have ownership of the identified steps to safeguard them and promote improvements. Very good 'monthly summaries' are completed together with young people. These excellent documents sensitively detail individual progress, for example 'engaging in education and that she has become more mature in her outlook with regards to others beliefs and choices, including disabilities and religion'. Young

people take real pride in these examples of their achievements further bolstering their relationships with their key workers and building self-esteem.

Proactive staff ensure that young people are registered with generic health services and can access specialist agencies as needed. Prescribed medication is dispensed sensitively and consistent health risk assessments identify whether young people can hold responsibility for their own medication. Consequently young people's health and feelings of well-being improve.

The enthusiastic and determined staff team imbue young people with a sense of purpose and ambition in furthering their education. They praise young people for all achievements and attend meetings at school as good parents would. Consequently all young people are engaged with education and have aspirations for their futures.

Young people are involved in a range of inclusive activities both within the home and local community. Each young person designates a hobby they would like to actively participate in and staff fully support them to engage with this. These range from attending the cinema regularly or going bowling to working with animals or going horse riding. Young people learn social and life skills while participating in these activities and build further bonds within their community.

Young people enjoy living in a spacious detached home in a quiet residential neighbourhood. The home blends in with surrounding properties promoting young people's sense of belonging yet maintaining their privacy. The home is well maintained and young people are benefitting from the completion of a recent re-decoration programme including the installation of new bedroom furniture. The large garden provides outdoor space for fun activities. Young people take pride in their home and remonstrate with each other if they do not show appropriate respect to their surroundings; one stated, 'This is not a playground. This is our home'.

### **Keeping children and young people safe   adequate**

A young person said, 'I feel very safe here and I know the staff can take care of me.' Relatives and professionals report that young people are safe when they are in the home and they are learning appropriate self-protection skills for when they are in the community. Stringent attention to safeguarding policies and robust risk assessments ensure young people's vulnerabilities are known and planned for.

Young people do not report any bullying issues. However as new residents are in the process of establishing their place in the home staff are fully aware that bullying behaviours could emerge and try to pre-empt any situations. A relative stated, 'They use talking to each other here and then they don't have to fight and (name) knows what he can and can't do.'

There have been a high number of missing episodes from this home since the last



inspection. This coincides with the admission of a number of new residents. However, as young people settle and build positive relationships with staff episodes of missing are reducing. A social worker said, 'She's made real progress there. Before this placement she was constantly missing. Now we know where she is and she is safe and (name) have worked to build that relationship.'

Comprehensive missing from home policies, linked with locally agreed procedures, are effectively followed for the most part. Proactive staff do all they can to prevent missing episodes and address any issues young people may have which could lead to them absenting themselves from the home. Staff use what they refer to as 'disruption techniques' to further protect young people and safeguard them from people who may pose a risk to them. Effective partnership working with local agencies, including the police, ensures that the reasons for young people being missing are fully explored. However, on occasion recording following missing episodes is not sufficiently robust.

Positive behaviour is promoted at all times and staff use restorative justice practice effectively to address issues between young people. Much improved use of a range sanctions enables young people to reflect on the consequences of negative behaviours. In addition, the committed staff team have introduced positive incentives for young people and give them rewards to aim for. For example, having a professional manicure. Some young people's behaviour remains unpredictable, volatile and on occasion violent. Physical interventions are appropriately implemented by well trained staff and are very rare. However young people are not recording their responses following such an event therefore their opportunities to learn from the experience are being missed.

Much improved recruitment records capture all necessary information in line with legislation. Consequently young people are cared for by staff who have been thoroughly vetted. Stringent attention to appropriate health and safety procedures ensure young people are cared for in a home which is physically safe to meet their needs. A young person said, 'This is the best of the children's homes I've been in.'

## **Leadership and management**

## **adequate**

The committed and experienced manager has held Registered Manager status since 2007 and has been the manager of this home since 2009. She holds a National Vocational Qualification, level 4 in management and leadership as well as the Diploma in Social Work and a BA in applied social science. She is supported by a suitably qualified deputy manager. The manager knows the young people in her care well and is ambitious for them to succeed to the best of their ability. For the most part the home is well managed, however annual holiday arrangements between the manager and deputy manager overlapped inappropriately leaving the home without a manager for a few days.

The home has demonstrated its capacity for improvement. All of the requirements and recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been met. External monitoring visits now incorporate the views of parents and professionals; records following restraint meet with legislation; the use, recording and monitoring of sanctions is much improved and recruitment records evidence checks made to ascertain the veracity of references. In addition, the home have improved admission procedures and how they welcome young people in to the home.

A detailed and informative statement of purpose and children's guide provide young people and other interested parties with a comprehensive view of the care to be provided. The home is operating in line with the statement of purpose, apart from the overlap of holiday dates between the manager and deputy manager which meant there was no manager on site in the home. This did not have a detrimental effect on young people's care as the local authority's performance manager was available to support staff where necessary.

Much improved external monitoring visits comply with legislation and contribute to improving care and outcomes for young people. For the most part the manager's auditing processes are robust and lead to improvements, for example in monitoring sanctions for their efficacy. However, there have been some omissions in ensuring that all significant events are appropriately recorded. In addition, although young people's and other interested parties' views are captured they are not being used to inform monitoring procedures as they should.

Comprehensive monthly updates in young people's files demonstrate the impact and value living at the home has had on their lives. Young people participate in completing these documents and therefore are fully supported to recognise the progress they have made and celebrate their achievements. A young person wrote, 'I couldn't have asked for better, supportive, caring, genuine people. I wouldn't have said that about a year ago but as I've got older I've realised everything they have done and said has been clearly for my benefit and I thank you all and respect what you have done for me.'

All staff, including agency workers, report that their supervision is regular, supportive and of good quality. However, the number of unfilled vacancies in the team since the last inspection has had an impact on staff, leading to high sickness levels. Young people have not been adversely affected as the exceptionally committed staff team who remain have worked extremely hard to maintain a good quality of care, ensuring that all shifts have been covered and young people's needs have been met. The manager and deputy manager have also covered night shifts. In addition, the use of two agency staff members, well known to young people, has ensured consistent relationships have not been disrupted. The home is now in the process of recruiting to all of the vacancies.

Young people are cared for by staff who are skilled, experienced and well trained to meet their individual needs. The effective use of a child sexual exploitation champion

ensures that all staff are well aware of current practice, further benefitting and protecting young people.

The majority of significant events are notified appropriately to all relevant agencies in a timely manner. However, there have been some instances where Ofsted have not been kept informed in line with legislation. This does not provide a multi-agency approach to the safeguarding of young people.

## What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

## 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.