

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC429748
Inspector	Joanna Heller
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	

Registered person	The Ryes College Limited
Registered person address	Aldham Business Centre, New Road Aldham COLCHESTER CO6 3PN
Responsible individual	Katherine Ann Yarbo
Registered manager	Vivienne Belinda Toms
Date of last inspection	07/08/2014

Inspection date	14/01/2015
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Previous inspection	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is well managed and led by a skilled and competent manager. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to promoting positive outcomes for young people. Changes in the staff team are rare which allows young people to build strong bonds with the staff who care for them. Young people are very positive about the home and say 'this is not like any care home I have been at before'.

Staff work well in partnership with families and other agencies ensuring young people receive individualised care which meets their needs. Placement breakdown is rare and the vast majority of young people enjoy stable long term placements.

Young people make strong individual progress and are effectively involved in all decisions made about their lives. Young people and their families rate the home as good. Placing authorities' comment on the strong individual progress children have made.

Young people feel safe and are safe. Behaviour management within the home is effective, with clear and consistent boundaries.

Although young people's individual needs are well met, the manager has been asked to ensure all significant incidents are notified to Ofsted and to monitor food storage

arrangements more effectively.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned and provides placements for children and young people on behalf of local authorities. The home offers care and accommodation for four children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/08/2014	Interim	sustained effectiveness
26/03/2014	Full	good
30/05/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/01/2013	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
13 (2001)	provide children with food which is properly prepared, wholesome and nutritious. In particular; ensure suitable food storage arrangements (Regulation 13 (a) (ii))	20/02/2015
30 (2001)	ensure that when any event listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person without delay notifies the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30 (1))	20/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- review the homes written development plan annually. (NMS 15.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people enjoy a stable, secure and happy environment in which they can grow and develop. Young people feel safe and are safe. The young male residents enjoy the company of positive male roles models within the staff team which helps them develop greater self-awareness. Young people develop strong bonds with staff and know that there is someone there to support them even after they move on. This helps develop young people's emotional resilience.

Young people are healthy and live an active life, for example, some young people are enjoying the opportunity to go to the gym and reducing their substance misuse. Young people are making improvements in their commitment to education and are benefitting from a wealth of informal learning activities. Most young people have good educational attendance and are making good progress. Young people who have previously not engaged in education are showing a strong commitment to finding a suitable post 16 educational placement.

Young people make good individual progress in key areas such as, keeping themselves safe, self-regulation of behaviour, personal care skills and reduction in offending behaviour. Young people's experiences of the home are positive and they rate the home as good to brilliant.

Young people benefit from individualised child-focused care. Young people enjoy living at the home and say 'I've never been anywhere like this'.

Young people are able to maintain and build upon relationships with people who are important to them. They are consulted on the daily running of the home and decisions made about their care.

Young people make good progress in developing self-care and independence skills which help them prepare for their adult life. They are becoming more aware of their role as members of the community. For example, one young person was thanked for helping erect a gazebo in town. Such experiences of being recognised as positive members of the local community promote young people's self-esteem.

Quality of care **good**

Staff adhere to a specific model of care and have a clear ethos as to what they want to achieve. Good communication between staff enables them to work in reflective and therapeutic way. Young people are very positive about the staff and clearly develop trusting and positive relationships within a short period of time. One young

person said it feels like a family home, not a children's home and commented 'I've never been anywhere like this before'.

Strong admission processes and high levels of staff commitment mean that placement breakdown is rare. Most young people stay at the home until they reach a point where they are ready for independence or return to their family. Staff undertake small, but highly meaningful gestures which promote young people's experience of feeling nurtured. For example, staff sometimes bake cakes at home to bring to the young people when they are next on shift. Such gestures demonstrate to young people that they remain in staff thoughts even when they are not with them. These positive relationships build trust and help young people develop their emotional resilience.

Equality and diversity is threaded through the service and young people receive high quality individualised care which meets their individual needs. Placing authorities are highly complementary about the home, comments include 'I can't speak highly enough of it, can't fault them' and 'I couldn't ask for better as to how staff meet his individual needs'.

School age young people maintain good attendance and are progressing well from their educational starting points. One young person recently achieved school recognition for 'most improved behaviour'. This is a significant area of personal growth for this young person who has not previously engaged in education. Young people gain appropriate assistance from a member of staff who specialises in offering older young people support and guidance regarding education and work opportunities.

Young people feel there is always someone to talk to when they need them. They enjoy a full schedule of activities including laser tag, football and going to the gym each week. Young people also have fun with staff, playing snooker, going to the cinema and trying 'tubing' at the local dry ski slope.

Young people feel consulted on all aspects of their care. Independent advocates visit the home regularly ensuring young people have a person outside of the home with whom they can raise any issues of concern.

Staff have successfully supported two young people over the past year to have a positive end of placement experience. These young people continue maintain regular contact and are welcomed into the home when they visit. One previous resident travelled for over two hours on the day of inspection to enjoy dinner with the staff and young people.

Young people are healthy and staff promote healthy lifestyles. Staff are proactive at working with partner agencies in addressing issues, such as, young people's cannabis use. Staff are sensitive to the emotional well-being of young people. Staff have are good knowledge about young people's individual needs. Staff are guided on how to

support young people through good care planning processes.

Young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills and are able to cook themselves healthy meals. Young people are planning a trip to a renowned chef's restaurant as part of their healthy eating plan. Food storage arrangements do not always ensure that food of suitable quality is available and that young people are suitably protected from food borne illness. For example, raw meat was stored unlabelled as to its use by date or when it had been placed in the fridge, and cream remained unused some ten days after being opened.

Staff positively support young people to maintain contact and build successful relationships with their families. For example, one young person was able to enjoy their first Christmas visit to their family on boxing day as staff arranged and provided support enabling the young person to build positive memories.

The home is appropriately located and spacious. Young people comment that the building feels comfortable and homely.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe, secure and well cared for. They strong relationships with staff with whom they can talk to about any issues which are concerning them. Staff provide consistently clear boundaries whilst maintaining a calm and quiet approach. With good systems in place to promote positive behaviour through regular praise and reward. This helps young people feel valued and builds their self-esteem. Placing social workers are very positive about how staff help young people begin to manage their behaviour and anger. Comments include 'Staff are amazingly tolerant and flexible but boundaried' and 'Staff have managed exceptionally well'.

Good quality risk assessments and management plans guide staff effectively with how to prevent and manage risk. One-to-one discussions take place regarding making positive choices, substance misuse and offending behaviours. Young people reduce their risk taking behaviours as a result of staff helping them understand the dangers they place themselves at.

Staff reflect on the key issues for young people and what may trigger incidents within the home or missing from care occurrences. Young people rarely go missing from care and this has been a particular area of growth for some young people. For example, one young person who was placed with a history of high levels of missing from care has only gone missing on one occasion since placement at this home. Staff are, however, clear on what to do should a young person go missing. Staff are proactive in engaging with local partner agencies to help keep young safe and reduce offending behaviour. Partner professionals say that young people are safer as a result of being at the home.

Staff are regularly trained in the use of physical intervention and use this only when young people present a risk to themselves or others. Sanctions, when required, are applied appropriately. The manager maintains suitable overview of sanctions and physical intervention enabling them to identify any emerging patterns and trends.

There have been no concerns of a safeguarding nature since the last inspection, however, staff are aware of their responsibilities and how to act should any concerns of a safeguarding nature arise. The organisation has developed positive relationships with the local safeguarding team.

The manager ensures good systems are in place to ensure the safety and security of the building. The manager addressed the non-closing of two fire doors during the inspection ensuring young people and staff continue to be safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

Leadership and management

good

Staff and young people benefit from consistently good quality management and leadership from a suitably qualified and experienced manager. The manager keeps up to date with changes in legislation and is committed to driving forward improvement. Young people, parents and placing authorities rate the home as good to excellent and outcomes for young people are strong. Comments from the young people include 'the manager is great; she is like the big mother figure'.

Little change occurs within the staff team ensuring young people are able to develop stable relationships with those who care for them. Staff are committed and competent, and young people have confidence in them.

Staff are well supported through regular supervision and team meetings which help develop staff confidence and provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice. A good quality core training program is in place which the manager ensures all staff complete. Training in therapeutic approaches and the model of care further enhance staff professional awareness and competence. Partner professionals comment on a team of 'deeply caring staff who enjoy working with the young people'. Placing authorities say 'Staff go above and beyond'.

Staffing levels are suitable to meet the assessed needs of young people. Young people who have particular needs benefit from having specific staff allocated to work with them. Staff sleep on site as this meets the needs of the current young people placed.

Staff maintain good relationships with the local partner agencies, such as, the police and youth offending teams. The provider has appropriately engaged with and effectively addressed any issues raised by neighbours ensuring positive relationships within the community are maintained.

The manager responds appropriately to any significant incident which occurs within the home. On one occasion, however, the manager did not inform Ofsted of the police being called to the home after the theft of the home's car. This did not impact on the welfare of young people accommodated, however, Ofsted is unable to make informed judgements as to events which occur within the home when it is not provided with relevant information.

There are strong quality monitoring processes at the home which aid the manager to have appropriate overview of the quality of care. The home's written development plan is not current and does not effectively demonstrate the manager's clear vision for the home, such as, the investment in developing a therapeutic approach. The home is appropriately resourced to ensure that the service meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. The manager has not ensured that the one requirement set at the previous inspection regarding notifying Ofsted of any significant events has been fully met, therefore this requirement is re set. This, however, has not reduced the quality of care provided to young people which remains strong.

What inspection judgements mean

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

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