

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC429702
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	Sharon Alexandria Broadley
Date of last inspection	10/06/2014

Inspection date	23/01/2015
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Previous inspection	improved 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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Staff provide a warm and caring environment in which young people make strong progress from their starting points. Young people and staff enjoy positive relationships, which underpin the individualised care provided. Admissions to the home are well planned, meaning that the vast majority of young people enjoy stable placements where they flourish.

Young people say they feel safe and rate the home as good. Parents have confidence in the home, and feel their child is progressing well. Placing authorities and partner agencies are very positive about the progress young people make. Comments include: 'Staff are deeply caring and care for the young person very well.'

The manager maintains good communication with parents, placing authorities and partner agencies, ensuring young people remain at the centre of the care delivered.

Behaviour management within the home is strong, with clear and consistent boundaries. Young people are maturing and learning to self-regulate their behaviours. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and young people feel able to talk to staff about things which worry them.

Although young people's individual needs are well met, the inspection identified

some shortfalls. These include the sufficiency of regular supervision, providing the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner to young people following physical restraint and in respect of the depth of information in the location risk assessment for the home.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of a small group of homes which are privately owned. The organisation also operates two schools. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children of either gender. The home offers care and accommodation for children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/06/2014	Interim	improved effectiveness
18/03/2014	Full	good
10/07/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
11/03/2013	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
31 (2001)	ensure that premises used for the purposes of a children's home are appropriately and suitably located, so that children cared for by the children's home are effectively safeguarded and are able to access services to meet needs identified in their care plans or placement plans. (Regulation 31 (1A)(a))	30/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there has been physical restraint, children's homes must be able to call on medical assistance as required and children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- provide staff with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Most young people flourish in this home and make strong individual progress. The vast majority enjoy a stable, secure and happy environment in which they can grow and develop. Young people enjoy living at the home and feel safe. They are developing strong attachments with staff who nurture them to develop their emotional resilience.

Young people make good individual progress in key areas, such as, engaging in education, self-regulation of behaviour and personal care skills. Despite the support offered by staff and partner agencies, some young people continue to take some risks, such as engaging in offending behaviour.

Young people are able to maintain and build upon relationships with people who are important to them. For some, this means that they have been able to share important days with their family, building a more positive relationship and good memories.

Young people are healthy and are developing awareness of how to maintain healthy and active lifestyles. They enjoy a wide variety of community based leisure activities, such as youth club, appropriate to their age, which provides opportunities to develop friendships in the local area.

Young people are consulted about decisions made about their care. They can raise any issues of concern with an independent advocate who visits the home regularly.

Young people develop self-care and independence skills appropriate to their age and understanding.

Quality of care **good**

Staff provide a nurturing stable environment where young people feel their needs and views are central to the support provided. The majority of young people make good individual progress, this is particularly evident in their behaviour and positive engagement in education.

Young people are consulted on all aspects of their lives and feel that staff are available for them. As a consequence, they are maturing and beginning to understand the difference between their wants and needs. Young people are helped to understand, and begin to come to terms with, their personal histories. This in turn, helps to develop their emotional resilience. For example, one placing social worker said that a young person 'is now much more open and relaxed, and is engaging in

therapy well, which is a major progress’.

Staff know young people well and are flexible in responding to their needs, reflecting on how individual life experiences may impact on how they perceive the world. Care is child focused and staff are sensitive to how young people process information and are best communicated with. Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the manager to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise.

Young people say the home is good and that they feel safe and secure. They enjoy a full schedule of activities including bicycle rides, football, youth club, bowling and laser quest. Young people also enjoy life enhancing appropriate seasonal experiences, such as trips to the pantomime and local Halloween events.

Detailed care plans, risk assessments and management plans effectively guide staff in meeting young people’s day to day needs. This means that staff are well equipped to provide consistent care that promotes positive outcomes for young people. The manager is reviewing the written plans to enable more meaningful involvement with young people, enabling them to express their goals and aspirations.

Clear guidelines and strategies are used consistently to manage behaviour. As a result, young people are self-assured, confident and behave appropriately most of the time. One parent described their child as ‘calmer and happier’. One young person, however, continued to struggle with accepting these boundaries, and on occasion this resulted in police being called to the home, which eventually undermined the placement. The placing social worker, reflected that staff did very well to support the complex needs of this child, stating ‘they took the time to understand the young person’.

Young people are healthy and are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles through partnership with the local health initiatives. Medication arrangements are robust, all staff have received training in the safe storage, recording and administration of medication, and medication is stored securely in a locked area. This supports young people’s physical wellbeing.

School age young people maintain good attendance and teachers comment on the positive home-school relationships which support their progress. For example, ‘one young person was a very reluctant learner however, this is much improved’ and ‘staff are keen for the young person to go on school trips and always promote his development’.

Staff members are good at building positive partnerships with families, promoting the opportunity for young people to build good memories. For example, staff facilitated and stayed with one young person and their family enabling them to enjoy Christmas day together. Parents rate the home as ‘brilliant’. Comments include: ‘I cannot think of how to improve the home. My child loves the staff and they are all really good.’

The home is appropriately located, spacious and homely. Young people invest in and are proud of their accommodation. One young person planted flower pots and arranged temporary decorative fencing to improve the appearance of the front garden.

The location based risk assessment developed by the home is a good starting point for looking at all the key issues. The home is in a low risk crime area. However, the location risk assessment requires further depth to fully identify all the challenges to effectively supporting young people achieve positive outcomes. For example, the assessment does not highlight that access to psychological health care is a concern in this area, and the action the organisation is taking to address this.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe, secure and well cared for. They develop strong relationships with staff who provide consistently clear boundaries whilst maintaining a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Good systems are in place to promote positive behaviour through the use of regular praise and reward. This helps young people feel valued and builds their self-esteem. Young people's positive relationships with staff underpin the therapeutic ethos of the home. This approach is helping individuals to understand their anger and why they behave in the way that they do. As a result, most young people's challenging behaviours have significantly reduced.

Sanctions, when applied, are appropriate and clearly recorded. Staff are trained in physical restraint and are clear on the threshold for physical intervention. Young people are clear as to why restraint takes place and have an opportunity to explore their feelings about this. However, they are not always offered the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner. This means that young people do not have the opportunity to speak to someone outside of the home about their feelings or have an independent assessment of any potential injuries sustained.

Professionals state that staff are strong at safeguarding. Positive relationships with partner agencies, such as the local safeguarding children's board and youth offending team are well established. This promotes young people's safety and wellbeing. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguard young people and know how to respond to any allegations or concerns. The provider's response to any concerns which have arisen has been appropriate, ensuring that the young people's welfare remains paramount.

Good quality risk assessments and management plans guide staff effectively in how to prevent and manage risk. The vast majority of young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours and young people rarely go missing from care. Some young people, however, despite staff support, do continue to place themselves at particular risk, for example, continuing to engage in violent or offending behaviour. Where this occurs staff are proactive in liaising with partner agencies in an attempt to help these

young people make more positive choices.

Young people say that bullying is not currently an issue within the home. When incidents have occurred in the past, staff have been robust in their response, ensuring young people are clear that bullying is not acceptable.

Robust recruitment processes ensure young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment within the home.

The manager ensures good systems are in place to promote the safety and security of the building. Fire precautionary arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

Leadership and management

good

The suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager has been in post for over two and a half years, providing consistently strong leadership. 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 say the outcomes for young people are good.

Young people benefit from an enthusiastic staff team who are committed to promoting positive outcomes for those in their care. Little change occurs within the staff team, ensuring young people are able to develop stable relationships with those who care for them. Staff and the manager are strong at working in partnership; young people's families and partner agencies speak very positively about the home.

Regular team meetings are a forum to discuss key issues within the home and develop reflective practice. Formal one-to-one staff supervision, however, is not sufficiently regular to ensure individual staff are consistently and effectively supported. The impact of this has been reduced because the manager provides regular informal support to those staff who request it.

A good quality training programme supports staff to develop their skills and competence. All staff undertake a core training programme during their probationary period and have either completed, or enrolled on, suitable level three training in caring for children and young people. Training in therapeutic approaches and the model of care further enhance staff professional awareness and competence.

Suitable staffing levels are in place to meet the assessed needs of young people, who have specific staff allocated to work with them where this is required. Staff sleeping on site are provided with suitable sleeping facilities.

The manager ensures that any significant events are well managed and all relevant

agencies informed as appropriate. Record keeping within the home is strong.

The home is suitably resourced to ensure that the service meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Robust quality monitoring processes in the home aid the manager to have effective overview of the quality of care provided. The manager has a clear vision for the home and is particularly committed to equipping staff to embed a therapeutic approach to working with young people. The manager has a good track record of ensuring any recommendations or requirements set are effectively addressed.

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.

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