

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/05/2015 21/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC402370
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	Wings Education Limited
Registered person address	Suite 3, Holmere Hall, Dykes Lane, Yealand Conyers, CARNFORTH, Lancashire, LA5 9SN

Responsible individual	Mr Paul Brosnan
Registered manager	Mrs Faye Harvey
Inspector	Mrs Judith Longden

Inspection date	20/05/2015 21/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC402370

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- A number of staff have left and some are currently disheartened as a result of staffing levels and the behaviour of young people. This has led to some inconsistencies in staff practice and a period of instability for young people.
- The quality of food is poor and does not support a healthy diet as identified in young people's care plans.
- Some records do not clearly identify changes to care plans or daily routines. In addition, records of young people's progress and achievement do not always indicate the impact the home has made.
- Risk management is not always effective. This is in relation to understanding why young people go missing from the home and the amendment of young people's risk assessments.
- The use of sanctions is punitive and staff do not have a clear understanding of restorative practice.
- Staff are not equipped with the skills and experience in specific areas to be able to effectively implement care to meet the needs of young people in line with the Statement of Purpose.

The children's home strengths

- The Registered manager is very experienced. She is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the home and strives for continued improvement.
- Partnership working is strong. Staff work closely with police, local authorities, safeguarding personnel and therapeutic professionals. There is a good relationship with the on-site school staff.
- The manager has identified learning from previous placements and has revised the referral and assessment procedures as a result.
- Self-harm care plans are very detailed and provide clear strategies for staff to support young people and minimise risk.

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
<p>6. The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose (b) ensure that staff- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background 	30 June 2015
<p>10. The health and well-being standard</p> <p>In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1)(a) ensure that the health and well-being needs of children are met; (c) ensure that children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles 	30 June 2015
<p>12. The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (2) (a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child 	30 June 2015

13. the leadership and management standard	30 June 2015
<p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child</p> <p>(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child</p> <p>(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child</p>	

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- The development of safe, stable and secure relationships with staff in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time (The Guide to the Quality Standards,, page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. This is in relation to young people climbing on the roof and young people going missing from the home (The Guide to the Quality Standards,, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The home should take account of information provided by independent return home interviews after a child has been missing from the home in order to assess risks and put arrangements in place to protect each child (The Guide to the Quality Standards,, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour (The Guide to the Quality Standards,, page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Staff should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that

will be helpful to the child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards,, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The service is a residential school that is registered as a children's home to provide care for 54 children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home's Statement of Purpose indicates they can also provide care for young people with traits of autistic spectrum disorders, moderate learning difficulties and other specific learning difficulties. The service is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/05/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
21/01/2014	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
<p>Young people are encouraged to build strong and positive relationships with staff. This should promote their capacity to trust adults and provide stability in their lives. This stability and trust is currently impaired due to a number of staff leaving and staff expressing disquiet about low staffing levels and lack of appropriate communication with senior staff. This has impacted on young people; some report that they are not able to say goodbye to some staff and are worried about raising any concerns with staff in case it damages the relationships they still have. Young people also say there is inconsistency in how staff manage behaviour and impose sanctions.</p> <p>Placement plans are quite detailed and identify the aims and objectives of a young person's time at the home. The daily routines and activities to be implemented in order to meet these aims are not always evident and where records have been updated it is not clear what the amendments are. This means it is difficult to understand the daily care a young person needs. The achievements of young people are recorded in individual files and regular reports are compiled to evidence the progress of young people. However they lack a sense of synergy and the impact the home has made on progress is not consistently recorded.</p> <p>The quality of the food provided is poor. Although young people are asked for their likes and dislikes, the menu is compiled by staff from the school canteen and ingredients are purchased centrally through the school. The quality of some meat products are poor, the menu also lacks sufficient fruit, vegetables and salads. Staff from the home are provided with the ingredients on a daily basis in order to cook the predetermined meal. This means young people are not able to fully participate in the planning, shopping, preparation and cooking of meals and this impacts on their independence skills. In addition, it does not support a healthy diet as identified in young people's care plans. The manager is aware of this shortfall and, at the time of the inspection a questionnaire was being completed by young people and staff about the menu. A requirement is made to ensure action is taken as a result of this questionnaire in order to provide healthy and nutritious food.</p> <p>Young people are involved in their care and some of the aspects of the operation of the home. They engage in house meetings, key work meetings and one-to-one consultations. They also have access to external advocates.</p> <p>Young people make progress with their education given their starting points. Attendance at the school on site is good and young people benefit from living in an</p>	

environment where school attendance and the importance of education are core values. Communication between school and care staff is good. This means there is a consistent approach to learning and this helps them to progress. Young people have access to a range of extra-curricular activities on the school site which provide them with additional learning opportunities. Some young people are provided with support to access the local community and are involved in activities such as the youth club which helps them build their social skills.

Contact with family is supported by staff that are aware of the individual arrangements for young people. One professional stated, 'they facilitate contact and are able to balance safety with practicalities and support the young person'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
<p>The home and school are situated in expansive grounds and the environment is generally kept as safe as possible. The school roof has, however, presented as a risk with a young person climbing on various levels of the building. This behaviour had been highlighted in the young person's initial risk assessment on coming to the home but there had been no clear guidance for staff on how to manage and minimise the risk for several months. The risk assessment has now been amended and some steps have been taken to restrict access at certain points and anti-vandal paint has proved to be a deterrent. Staff supervision and vigilance has also improved, resulting in a reduction in incidents.</p> <p>Incidents of absence and missing from the home are well recorded. The antecedents to the event and steps taken to locate the young person are clearly detailed. Any concerns regarding sexual exploitation are highlighted. On return they are made to feel welcomed and safe by staff. Return interviews by an independent person are mostly undertaken, although some are held several days after the event and in excess of the recommended 72 hours. The information from these interviews is not always shared with the staff or manager of the home. Although this provides confidentiality for the young person it does not inform the staff of any reasons for the absence, patterns or trends in the incidents. In addition, staff do not routinely discuss incidents within key work sessions with young people. Consequently staff are unable to take the necessary action to manage the risk effectively.</p> <p>Some young people engage in other risky behaviours such as criminal activity, drug use and self-harm. Some very positive work with other agencies, such as the youth offending service, police, health and therapeutic services, supports staff in managing these behaviours and helps young people as much as possible. Very</p>	

good, detailed self-harm care plans provide clear strategies for staff to help reduce the risk of harm.

The use of physical intervention has decreased and any use of restraint is recorded in good detail. Positive behaviour is encouraged by the use of a points and rewards system which some young people enjoy as it provides structure and routine and helps them achieve their targets. Others find it very restrictive and regimental and express their annoyance saying, 'everything has to be a reward, why can't we just have something because that is what young people have?'

Sanctions are often very punitive and some are not relevant to the behaviour. The recording of the effectiveness of a sanction is weak. Staff are encouraged to use restorative practice rather than sanctions but lack the training and understanding of how to put this into practice. This means young people are not effectively supported to understand the consequences of their behaviour.

All prospective employees undergo comprehensive screening for establishing their suitability to work with young people. Visitors are checked and escorted where appropriate. This prevents unsuitable people having access to the young people.

Staff have effective links with the local safeguarding service. Any child protection concerns are referred to the necessary professionals. Appropriate follow up action is taken to prevent any harm to young people. Staff are trained in safeguarding and are aware what to do in the event of a concern or allegation made by a young person. Staff are aware of issues of sexual exploitation and have good links with specialist police personnel in order to gain further knowledge and skills to protect young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
<p>The manager is very experienced and is suitably qualified. She is enthusiastic for change and understands the areas of the service that need to be improved. A comprehensive home improvement plan provides the detail of how these improvements will be progressed. Two care managers share the manager's office which has improved oversight and communication between senior staff. Care staff express that they sometimes feel this positive communication does not filter through to the whole staff team. The manager has already taken steps to rectify this with an increase in the frequency of team meetings and a review of responsibilities for senior staff.</p> <p>Young people and staff identify that there are staff shortages particularly at night</p>	

time, and when trying to manage poor behaviour by some young people. A new rota is being drawn up in order to rectify these shortfalls but will not be implemented until September. A requirement is therefore made to ensure there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of young people.

The manager and staff have also identified that they need to have training in understanding autism. This follows a period where a young person was placed with needs that extended beyond the skills and experience of the staff team. The behaviours displayed by this young person had a negative impact, not only on the staff, but also the other young people at the home. This young person has since left the home. The home's Statement of Purpose has very recently been revised but still includes reference to the home being able to work with young people with autistic behaviours. A requirement is made to ensure staff have the skills and experience to effectively implement care to meet the needs of young people in line with the Statement of Purpose.

The manager has recently implemented a revised referral and assessment process to ensure the home is the right placement for a young person and they can benefit from a positive transition into the home. This is as a result of learning from a previous placement which proved to be inappropriate after a short time. The revised assessment process has proved to be very successful with one young person stating, 'this has been the best transition, the one that really went as it should.'

Staff have a good induction into the home and are provided with good quality supervision. A range of training courses are provided for staff to enhance their skills. Staff have attended self-harm training which has included some aspects of dealing with ligatures. A number of staff have also been booked onto a more in-depth course to provide support to young people who self-harm and use ligatures. Staff have not yet undertaken training in restorative practice although this has been identified as a need during staff meetings. The manager has made contact with the police in order to identify a facilitator for this course.

Partnership working is strong. The manager and staff work closely with a number of professionals in order to promote positive experiences for young people. There is a good relationship between education and care and a shared vision to encourage young people to reach their full potential. Effective challenge is made where the manager feels the best interests of a young person are not being met. For example, one young person was offered an opportunity to undertake training with the local football team. This opportunity was in jeopardy due to issues of finding suitable accommodation for him during the school holiday. The manager was able to negotiate his stay and provide appropriate sports kit and equipment for him to take part in the course. This has resulted in him being offered an academy place with the team.

External monitoring is provided monthly by an independent person. The manager

welcomes any external scrutiny and challenge and she uses this information to improve the care offered to young people. Internal monitoring of the operation of the home is satisfactory and progress of young people is monitored regularly although the impact of the home on this progress is not always evident.

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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