

## **Children's homes inspection - Full**

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>02/06/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC035409</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Secure Unit</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Miss Julie Tinkler</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Mr Philip Cass</b>



<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>02/06/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good Progress</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>	<b>Good</b>



**SC035409**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Most young people achieve their personal learning goals and make excellent progress relative to their starting points and length of stay. They enjoy their education and become confident in their work.
- Excellent links between care staff and teachers help set appropriate personal development targets.
- Staff are very good at building strong and supportive relationships with young people who find it very difficult to trust adults.
- The behaviour management of young people is consistently very good. Care and teaching staff are highly skilled in managing complex group dynamics and de-escalating conflict. Incentive and reward schemes help young people to manage their own behaviour.
- Young people do not experience bullying.
- Management of self-harming behaviours is highly effective because young people significantly reduce both the scale and frequency of self-injurious behaviours during their time at the home.
- The staff and managers are highly effective advocates for the rights of young people. The home challenges other agencies robustly when necessary to achieve good outcomes for young people.



## 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
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation (Regulation 39 (3))	09/07/2015
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	09/07/2015
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	09/07/2015
<p>13. (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that-</p> <p>(a) Helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) Promotes their welfare.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home; this is with particular reference to the home's search procedures</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (2)(h))</p>	09/07/2015

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account



of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure they meet the needs of the children; specifically, ensure the planned increase in permanent education staff takes place (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- Ensure children's home staff encourage the young person to continue their education or training and support them to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the option they choose; specifically, that access for young people to a range of quality vocational training courses continues to improve (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.17)
- Ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn, specifically, improve analysis of the existing education data to provide an overall assessment of progress and link this to the evaluation of the quality of teaching learning and assessment (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28, paragraph 5.18)
- Seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This is with particular reference to the homes 'small lounges' (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)



## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years and accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2014	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
04/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
21/01/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
18/07/2013	CH - Full	Good



## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>good</b>
<p>Young people make good progress in all areas of their lives. Most are very positive about their time in the home. One young person stated, 'Being in here has saved me.' Another said, 'I love it here.' Staff are very skilled in supporting young people to reflect honestly on previous behaviours. They help young people to make positive lifestyle choices and develop strategies to cope in community settings. As a result, most young people look forward to the future with confidence.</p> <p>Building strong relationships with young people in crisis is a key area of strength. Staff are resilient and persistent in their attempts to engage positively with young people who often have considerable difficulty in trusting adults. The young people recognise this. One young person stated, 'Staff are great at forming good relationships with us kids.' Another young person said, 'Staff are wicked because they really care and support you through dark times.' The ethos and culture of the home is summed up by a young person who said, 'A number of staff go that extra mile with us.' A young person gave an example of a particular member of staff who 'came in last Sunday just to spend time with me. He didn't have to do that.' As young people learn to trust staff they begin to value their advice and guidance. They start to make progress towards achieving the objectives in their care plans. A social worker stated that a young person 'is accessing support, whereas they were refusing all support prior to being in a secure unit.'</p> <p>Young people develop improved social skills. Staff are good role models. This encourages young people to interact with courtesy, respect and good humour. Young people also grow in emotional resilience. As they begin to feel valued, they become better able to cope with setbacks and difficulties. This ensures that they have improved prospects when they return to community settings. Young people also gain improved self-confidence as they achieve educational success. The high quality programme of leisure activities supports young people to grow in self-esteem and have fun. Young people say that their placement in the home has provided an opportunity to develop their sporting and artistic talents.</p> <p>Care planning is of a good quality. Detailed plans and strategies are quickly put in to place following admission. These are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them current. Transition planning is strong and often innovative. Managers ensure that transition arrangements are integral to the care planning and review process. Staff prepare young people well to move on from the home, in consultation with placing authorities. For example, young people have taken part in residential trips that form part of vocational qualifications. Where young people find it difficult to</p>	



cope while in the community, staff take prompt and effective action to return them to the home. Young people feel that staff do all they can to support them and to prepare them effectively to return to their own communities.

Since the previous full inspection, improved resources are available to promote the health and wellbeing of young people. For example, nursing cover has increased significantly. The home is also better served by a combination of newly commissioned services that address mental and emotional health, as well as drug, alcohol and substance misuse. These improvements, coupled with the existing arrangements with the local General Practitioner (GP), dentist and optician, ensure that health needs are addressed well. Staff are also good at helping young people to develop more healthy lifestyles through encouraging healthy eating and exercise leading to improved fitness and wellbeing. Other health promotion work in areas such as sexual health, relationships and oral hygiene are addressed sensitively with young people throughout their stay. Medication storage, administration and monitoring systems are effective. Consequently, young people's health improves as they have their physical, emotional and mental health needs well met.

Young people live in an environment that is conducive to meeting their needs. The standards of décor, fittings and furnishings are good. A number of young people were happy to show inspector's their bedrooms which were all personalised, pleasant spaces. Essential security arrangements do not lead to an institutional feel. However, some communal areas in the home do not present as welcoming or homely as they could be. This is because they are sparsely furnished and contain few leisure or play facilities. Some young people say that they are reluctant to make use of these areas because they are 'bare and lifeless'. Managers are aware of this issue and have plans in place to make better use of these spaces.

Staff actively seek the views and opinions of young people through a range of formal and informal mechanisms. This ensures that young people are able to influence decisions affecting the day-to-day running of the home. For example, some fitness equipment has been purchased following requests made at young people's meetings.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>good</b>
<p>High staff ratios and careful supervision of communal areas ensure that young people feel safe. They say that they are very confident in the ability of staff to keep them safe. Risk assessment processes are comprehensive and robust. Potential hazards are quickly identified and removed by staff who have a good understanding of their health and safety responsibilities. Where young people who</p>	



may pose a risk to themselves or others are admitted, staff devise effective plans that minimise the likelihood of injury or harm. Young people who display high levels of violence are helped to understand the impact of their behaviours. As a result, violent incidents reduce over time. Creative strategies are put in place to minimise the impact of violent behaviours on other young people. Young people say that they are satisfied with the actions taken by staff to ensure that they do not have to witness violence in their home. Young people confirm that they do not experience bullying. This is a significant achievement because many young people have considerable experience of bullying in previous placements. Security is effective. There have been no incidents of absconding from the home.

Relationships with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and external safeguarding agencies are well-established. All relevant safeguarding information is shared promptly. The home responds well to any allegations or disclosures received. Staff know what to do if they should suspect or they receive an allegation that a child is being abused. Safeguarding practice is further strengthened by robust recruitment practice. This minimises the risk that young people might have contact with unsuitable adults. Young people have access to independent advocates who are skilled at providing opportunities for them to raise concerns, or express grievances.

Management of self-harming behaviours is particularly effective. Self-harm quickly reduces in both scale and frequency following admission to the home. Staff provide considerable reassurance to young people in crisis because they are calm and empathetic. They say that, 'we don't make a drama out of it; that is not what these kids need.' Staff help young people to understand the underlying causes of their distress and support them to find safer ways of coping.

Behaviour management is another key strength of the home. Staff build very effective relationships with young people. These relationships enable the staff to challenge poor behaviour robustly while ensuring that young people continue to feel valued. Staff are very good at recognising and rewarding good behaviour. They rarely miss an opportunity to praise young people when they demonstrate improved behaviour. This means that young people are motivated to behave well and quickly learn that good interactions result in positive consequences. A young person stated that the home has 'helped me develop trust, helped me with my anger problems, and helped me to respect other people.'

Formal incentive and reward schemes are used well by staff to support good behaviour. They are also used effectively to help young people make positive lifestyle choices, take regular exercise, and achieve well at school. A social worker stated, 'Clear rewards systems are in place to support good behaviour.' Another social worker stated that the home adopts 'Good strategies to support young people and encourage pro-social behaviour.' Sanctions are used infrequently, reflecting the very positive communication and relationships between staff and young people. Where sanctions are required, they are appropriate, proportionate,



and carefully monitored by managers.

Staff are skilled in the implementation of de-escalation techniques. They intervene assertively to resolve conflict between young people and have good strategies to help young people who are angry. Experienced staff are highly effective in using their tone of voice and body language to diffuse aggression. They ensure that young people are able to regain their composure without losing face. When restraint is required to ensure the safety of young people and staff, only approved techniques are used. Managers and external safeguarding professionals monitor restraint incidents very carefully. This ensures that practice is appropriate and any learning points are identified and taken forward. When young people present such risks that they need to be managed away from the group, staff monitor them diligently and are pro-active in supporting them to re-join their peers as soon as possible.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>requires improvement</b>
<p>The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement because complaints records are not robust, staff are not fully supported to develop their practice through supervision and appraisal processes, training is not regularly refreshed, and managers do not effectively scrutinise search procedures so that they develop and improve over time.</p> <p>The manager was registered with Ofsted in 2013, is suitably qualified and has extensive experience of looking after young people with complex and challenging needs. She is well supported by her established team of competent deputy managers. The management team have a detailed understanding of the needs and plans of each young person. They are able to provide clear evidence that every child is making progress during their time at the home.</p> <p>Staff report that they feel well supported by the management team. However, support systems are not always used well by managers. Although attendance in team meetings has improved in recent months, formal supervision does not take place with sufficient frequency to allow staff enough opportunities for meaningful reflection. In addition, although staff receive essential training so that they are able to meet the needs of young people, some training is not always refreshed or updated as required.</p> <p>Young people stated that they feel able to speak to any of the staff or to the Registered Manager if they wish to raise any concerns or complaints. They say</p>	



their complaints are acknowledged and listened to. Records confirm that generally young people are satisfied with how their complaint has been dealt with. Though not all records demonstrate fully the actions taken or the outcome of the complaint. One complaint remains under investigation after 13 weeks. This was due to delays in the local authority complaints department and not the children's home. The Registered Manager has raised this matter with senior managers in the local authority in order to review practices so this does not happen again.

Monitoring of searching practices and associated records by managers ensures that any search is only carried out in response to identified risk and is authorised. However, some searches continue to be authorised when there is little realistic prospect of intercepting contraband items. The opportunity to improve practices was not identified through monitoring.

Managers understand the majority of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Long term plans are in place to develop the home by building additional classrooms and creating a 'step-down unit' to support young people who are preparing to move to community settings. Short term development objectives are clearly understood. For example, the home is actively recruiting new staff to fill existing vacancies. The Registered Manager has identified that the home's monitoring systems have not been wholly effective in supporting improvement. As a result, new monitoring templates have been introduced and a new independent visitor has been appointed. In addition, the new role of internal quality assurance manager has been developed to improve oversight and monitoring and systems further developed to track patterns and trends of behaviour. New systems have also improved the quality of record keeping.

The home's Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed. Consequently, it is a comprehensive document that accurately reflects the objectives and ethos of the home. Parents, carers and stakeholders are clear about the purpose of the home and the service it provides. The young person's guide provides detailed information to young people so that they know about the homes routines and their rights and responsibilities.

The home appropriately notifies all relevant agencies of any significant incidents and works collaboratively with them to improve the services and care provided to young people. Managers are very effective advocates for young people. They challenge professionals and relevant agencies to support young people to receive good quality services.



	Judgement grade
<b>Outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Soon after arriving at the home young people are provided with an effective induction to education. This provides good information on what is available. A comprehensive initial assessment takes place within the first few days that identifies a wide range of diverse support needs. This helps to prioritise young people's learning needs and helps settle them into education quickly. Additional information on prior attainment and special educational needs, where available, informs the planning of learning. Where information is not made available, the young person's personal tutor is proactive in seeking out special educational needs statements from previous schools or local authorities. Following assessment, young people are included in the process of designing their individual programmes and learning strategies.</p> <p>Most young people achieve their personal learning goals during their stay and are successful in attaining qualifications that are appropriate to their level of ability. Young people generally engage well in their learning and make excellent progress relative to their starting point and length of stay. They enjoy their education and become confident in their work. Young people make good improvements in developing their English and mathematics. They make excellent progress in improving their personal and social development skills. Attendance remains consistently very good. Incidents in which young people refuse to engage with school are rare. Standards of young people's work are good and particularly high in art. More able young people are given good support as they work towards their GCSE's.</p> <p>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good with some aspects outstanding. A high level of individual support for young people takes place and care staff are used effectively to help less able students to progress. Teachers re-enforce English and mathematics well throughout most of the subject areas. Teachers use a variety of activities to successfully engage and motivate young people. Education staff promote equality and diversity well. They challenge any stereotypical views and biases expressed by young people. Consequently, they successfully extend young people's understanding of diversity issues.</p> <p>Frequent and regular reviews of young people's progress are undertaken by teachers. Young people are clear about the progress they are making and agree their objectives and targets with their teachers. Classroom accommodation is good. Learning resources are improved since that last inspection by the introduction of tableau computers. Teachers use these effectively to support learning. Good use is made of wall displays to celebrate young people's work.</p> <p>The curriculum available to young people is good. Since the last inspection, improved links with the local college have resulted in a small number of young</p>	



people having the opportunity to attend vocational taster courses at local colleges. In addition, young people have opportunities to gain valuable work experience within the home's kitchen. Utilising the existing skills of teachers has enabled a small amount of vocational based activities to take place. The accommodation for vocational training is inappropriate and does not reflect a positive learning environment. However, plans to build purposeful vocational training accommodation are now in place. A good focus is on developing English and mathematics skills. In addition, other core subjects include science, ICT, humanities, modern foreign languages, art, music, and PSHE. Access to physical education is part of the young person's timetable. The curriculum is flexible and successfully provides courses for both short and long stay young people.

Behaviour management is consistently very good. In general, the behaviour of young people is excellent and they have a good understanding of the standards of classroom behaviour that are expected of them. A high level of mutual respect exists between young people and teachers. This helps create a harmonious learning environment. Teachers are skilled at de-escalating poor behaviour. They challenge inappropriate language well and set clear boundaries which young people understand. Care staff and teachers work well together to manage poor behaviour. On the rare occasions where young people are removed from class, they are skilfully and swiftly managed back into learning. Excellent links between care staff and teachers also help to set appropriate personal development targets in relation to behaviour, attitude, and effort to help them progress and develop.

Enrichment activities are good with opportunities for young people to take part in a variety of leisure activities. These activities broaden their knowledge and understanding while enabling their personal development. Young people have the opportunity to engage in accredited activities such as art, music, PE, and food technology outside education hours. Good links are in place with the Prince's Trust and the army cadets. Mobility is used effectively to support education in a variety of external visits. Teachers provide information, advice, and guidance informally. More specialist advice is available when requested by the Local Authority's Connexions service.

The management of education is good. Plans are in place to increase the number of permanent education staff. Well-developed and effective quality improvement systems include the observation of teaching, learning, and assessment. The self-assessment report is clear and provides a realistic assessment of the education provision. Data analysis has improved since the last inspection. This provides detailed and comprehensive information on the characteristics of young people arriving at the home and effectively informs the planning of the curriculum. For example, accredited courses suitable for young people who only have short stays have been introduced. However, current analysis of available data does not identify the overall progress made by young people, or link to the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment.







## 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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