

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

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>15/09/2015</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC459857</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Full</b>            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |
| <b>Registered Manager</b>      | <b>Position vacant</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Barnaby Dowell</b>  |

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>  | <b>15/09/2015</b> |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>  | <b>N/A</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>       |
| <b>The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.</b>     |                   |
| <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>Good</b>       |

**SC459857**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Young people are happy in their home and respond well to staff, who strive to achieve the best outcome for them.
- The home is comfortable, well maintained and adapted to meet the needs of young people.
- There is a close and bonded staff team who work together to share ideas and support each other in the care of young people. Young people are kept safe by thorough and detailed risk assessments.
- Young people make progress in all areas of their lives, from achieving in education to working part time during the weekend.
- Young people move on from the home successfully; staff are skilled in developing their skills in budgeting and cooking.
- Staff engage young people in various areas of interest during key work sessions; this includes painting and making sculptures.
- Young people benefit from a strong and committed management team who value the importance of supervision and support for staff.
- When young people go missing, managers do not ensure that staff record missing patterns or provide a return home interview. The statement of purpose does not reflect the new management and staff structure.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

- A charity and provider of social housing operates and manages this children's home. Registration is for the care and accommodation for no more than eight children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The age range is from 12 - 17 years old, with two of the eight bedrooms used as emergency placement for 140 days only each calendar year.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 19/03/2015      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 29/01/2015      | Full            | Good                      |
| 20/09/2013      | Full            | Good                      |

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

| Recommendations   | Due date               |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)</p>  | <p>30 October 2015</p> |
| <p>Keep records detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. (Regulation 36 (Schedule 3 (14))) This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where, appropriate with the parents. Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 9.31)</p> | <p>30 October 2015</p> |
| <p>Include the following elements of the workforce plan in the statement of purpose: (in accordance with schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20)) the staffing structure, experience and qualifications of staff and arrangements for supervision of staff practice. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.10)</p>   | <p>30 October 2015</p> |

## 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 settle well in the home. It is in a quiet, prosperous part of the borough with good transport links. This helps young people to attend school and keep in regular contact with their friends and family.</p> <p>Weekly residents meetings allow young people to feel represented and valued. These act as a forum for planning activities and pin pointing any potential issues among young people.</p> <p>One young person commented, 'I like being in this home, I am supported in everything I want to do, play rugby, go to school, I even get to have a job and earn extra money at the weekend.'</p> <p>Young people live in a well maintained home, with a homely atmosphere. There are a number of photos around the building showing young people enjoying some recent activities. There is a large garden with space for a number of recreational activities. Young people have a space for private study where they enjoy safe and controlled access to the internet.</p> <p>Former residents return to the home and keep in regular contact. They are able to provide advice and mentoring to young people in the home. This allows young people to develop a greater understanding of their history and their journey as a looked after child.</p> <p>Keyworkers are proactive and supportive towards young people. Activities such as using the trampoline and attending scouts, support healthy living and the development of social skills. Mementos of these activities are stored in memory books for young people to keep.</p> <p>Young people enjoy a close and positive bond with staff. There is a strong focus on enjoying activities together and developing trust, self-confidence and self-esteem. This allows them the space to begin to express their own identity and individuality. The success of this work is clearly visible by the young people's improved self-care</p> |                 |

skills.

Young people benefit from planned and regular key work. Written recordings are in the form of a letter summarising the session in a child centred manner.

Young people enjoy their own 'positives' book, which allows staff to pass on compliments and congratulations for good behaviour.

Young people make good progress from their own individual starting points. For example, one young person arrived at the home with an extreme phobia towards food. Following intense key work and staff support addressing the causes of this behaviour, he succeeded in obtaining a qualification in food hygiene.

Reward charts and financial incentives support educational progress in the home. Keyworkers assist in reducing young people's anxieties and worries by liaising with schools for extra support. For example, one young person re-engaged with school by starting to enter the premises by the back door; this helped to address his anxieties. He has since begun the entering by the front door and completed his course.

Education providers help to monitor and support attendance. When young people are not in education, work sheets and visits to museums assist in promoting learning.

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
|  | Judgement grade |
|--|-----------------|

| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>   | <b>Good</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <p>Young people develop social skills in their home. Staff worked well to address the issue of safe touching when young people exhibit sexualised behaviour. Content filters control ensure safe access to the internet from the home and controls over access to the internet via mobile phones. This helps to manage risk, improve social skills and improve behaviour.</p> <p>Young people receive specialist services. Ongoing therapy has allowed a young person to become free from medication and progress towards returning home. The provision of an alcohol and drugs worker has helped lower risk taking behaviour for another young person and assisted him in complying with his youth offending community order.</p> <p>The home follows an established missing procedure. Staff attempt to trace whereabouts via monitoring Oyster usage and close liaison with family and friends. Feedback from local police is very positive: 'The needs of young people are at the heart of everything they do.'</p> <p>At present, staff do not record missing statistics and analyse these properly. This prevents key professionals such as the police from monitoring any patterns and themes, to ascertain if there is any other cause to the behaviour.</p> <p>The home follows a correct safeguarding procedure. This ensures young people are safe when disclosures occur. Risk assessments are multi-layered and thorough, balancing the needs of the young person concerned with those of the peer group.</p> <p>Effective partnership work with parents safeguards young people. This includes liaison and permission over sensitive issues such as sexual health screening.</p> <p>Safe contact with friends and family is valued. Young people feel happy to bring their friends to the home. One family member commented, 'Staff in home could not do enough for him, they always let me know what is going on.'</p> <p>Young people's wishes and feelings have priority in the home. Updated risk assessment and care plans reflect this. Independent advocacy is available when required.</p> <p>Recently staff provided a Dictaphone to a young person. This enabled him to express himself within his own timescale and in private.</p> |             |



Young people enjoy individualised care. For example, staff provided a sensory texture box and a weighted blanket to assist one young person with anxieties over bedtime routines. This has helped him maintain good behaviour and trust the staff concerned.

Managers have introduced a new 'traffic light' behavioural management system. This allows staff to follow simple colour coded system to manage behaviour. Specific strategies and techniques ensure that behaviour does not reach the 'red' stage. Staff and young people understand this system and it works well.

Physical restraint use is minimal in the home. When restraints occur, there is evidence of managerial oversight and support for young people and the staff concerned. This helps to maintain good behaviour and keep young people safe.

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
|  | Judgement grade |
|--|-----------------|

| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>  | <b>Good</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <p>The Registered Manager left the home in August 2015 and her deputy appointed to manage the home. She has fifteen years of suitable experience and two years of working in the home. She has completed the NVQ level four in leadership and management. They have a good and consistent working relationship.</p> <p>Young people have benefited from a smooth transition to the new management team. The manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has the respect of the young people and the staff team.</p> <p>Managers value the importance of supporting and supervising staff. Case files show firm management oversight of risk assessments and care plans. Managers are proactive in challenging the local authority's care planning and pushing for outreach support when this is in the young people's best interests.</p> <p>Managers have acted to refine the referral process. Placing authorities are now required to provide more information on referral. This helps to ensure that only appropriate referrals are accepted and that young people remain settled in the home.</p> <p>Managers have addressed the concerns raised by the previous inspections. There has been a significant effort to decorate and maintain the home. Managers have implemented a new behavioural management policy, which has helped maintain good behaviour and keep young people safe.</p> <p>There is a culture of learning and development in the home. Staff recently began to introduce attachment style interviewing and use the principle of social pedagogy. This helps them to understand the history and presenting behaviour of young people more clearly.</p> <p>Weekly team meetings are an opportunity to discuss the latest research in the field of social care. One staff member commented, 'I love working here, we are real team and really pull together, there is always support there if you need it.'</p> <p>There has been a recent programme of recruitment in the home. Staff recruitment is safe and their references verified. Young people participated during the interview process. There is an effective programme of induction and support for new staff members. Managers plan to develop the home by assigning specialist roles to staff members. Young people will benefit from staff members who are able to bring</p> |             |

their own specific expertise to key work sessions, for example drama therapy or art and design.

Managers value the importance of multi-agency working and its importance in the safeguarding of young people. External professionals praise the staff team for their report writing and their commitment to the exchange of appropriate information. Staff access specialist advice and support from the local authority on specific issues such as child sexual exploitation.

Managers liaise with other providers from their organisation in the local area to obtain staffing and training. This limits the use of agency staff and provides more consistency for young people.

Staff recently received training from a specialist semi-independence provider within the organisation. This emphasised the importance of promoting budgeting and cooking skills. Managers have facilitated introduction visits to the provision concerned; this helps to reduce young people's anxiety and support a smooth transition for young people seeking a move.

## 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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