

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC035352
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Northamptonshire County Council
Registered person address	Northamptonshire County Council, John Dryden House, 8-10 The Lakes, Northampton, NN4 7YD

Responsible individual	Satinder Gautam
Registered manager	Timothy Morrison
Inspector	Cathey Moriarty

Inspection date	07/10/2015
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	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC035352

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive consistent care in a stable, structured environment. They are helped to develop positive relationships and supported to engage with a range of services to meet their needs. As a result, they are making good progress.
- Staff are committed to ensuring that young people have the skills and confidence to remain in education, training or employment when they move on from this home.
- Staff are sensitive and tenacious in ensuring that young people have a range of opportunities for contact with family and significant others.
- Each young person has an individual plan for independence. Young people are encouraged to develop independence skills and to take part in a range of social activities.
- Staff are aspirational for young people to do well, they reinforce positive behaviours and celebrate achievements. As a result, young people have enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Managers support staff to develop their skills and understanding of young people's needs. However, the registered manager is required to ensure that staff receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.

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
33: The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	11/12/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It is registered to care for up to eight young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/11/2014	Full	Good
24/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
09/01/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>The main focus of this home is to develop the independence skills of the young people. The environment supports this. There is an independent flat and a bed sit. There are plans to develop another room into a second bedsit. Young people living in this home receive consistent care in a stable and structured environment. They are supported to develop positive relationships and to engage with a range of services to meet their needs. As a result, they are making good progress.</p> <p>Staff are committed to enabling young people to move safely into independence, and to have the skills and confidence to remain in education, training or employment when they move on from the home.</p> <p>The home ensures that admissions to the home are well planned. Managers consider the needs of the young person and their compatibility with residents living in the home. They undertake detailed risk assessments. Young people are encouraged to visit the home prior to moving in. Managers ensure that there is a safe transfer of information, which includes their views, wishes and feelings.</p> <p>Managers and staff have developed the placement plan, referred to as 'the action plan for the placement.' It now incorporates the needs of the young person and planned interventions to meet those needs, as well as capturing the progression of the young person towards agreed objectives. In this way, young people and professionals can identify progress that has been made and areas that may require further development and support.</p> <p>Staff liaise with relevant professionals in a timely way to ensure young people's needs are being met. They review young people's progress weekly and send a monthly chronology to case responsible social workers that includes significant events, achievements, and any concerns. Social workers and family are informed immediately of any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>A key strength of this home is proactive contact and liaison with family, to support the young people. There is an experienced member of staff with a dedicated family liaison role. Having established the young person's views, wishes and feelings, the family liaison lead and keyworker visit the family. They explore ways to improve contact arrangements for the young person. This has proved to be beneficial for a</p>	

number of the young people living in this home, particularly those approaching adulthood. One young person is experiencing very positive contact with an aunt and uncle, with whom he previously had very little contact. Another young person is repairing relationships with family members, supported by staff. Staff are sensitive and tenacious in giving young people a range of opportunities for contact.

Young people have clear, detailed health plans. Staff ensure that they are registered with a GP and Dentist following admission. They are successfully encouraged and supported to attend a range of preventative health appointments. Keyworker sessions cover the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Staff recognise that taking responsibility for their health needs is an essential element of independence skills.

Young people have structured daily routines; they all have education or training placements. One young person, who has moved into the home recently, is in full time employment. To enhance this, staff have secured a college place to ensure that there is a significant element of training and learning. Staff work closely with the local authority virtual school team. Managers are proactive in ensuring that educational plans include aspirational targets for young people. A professional said: 'The registered manager prioritises plans for the young people and will be proactive and flexible, so that meetings take place to agree plans.'

Young people have made good progress from their starting points. A number of young people in this home have had very poor experiences with education in the past. One young person, who had previously been out of education and was isolated, is now attending an access training course. He has become increasingly ambitious. He is developing confidence and social skills that will support him to do well in the future. Experienced staff are continuously assessing the progress of young people; they understand that self-confidence can be tenuous and requires robust support. As a result, staff respond quickly to setbacks and avert or reduce difficulties.

Young people have access to an 'IT room', with PCs and printing facilities. This enables them to undertake homework, coursework, and other research. They are provided with up to date information about the safe use of digital technology.

There is an individualised plan for each young person, following an assessment of need. The plan includes an independence living allowance, with the opportunity to enhance this through an incentive scheme. Young people are supported to develop an understanding of living on a budget. They have their own kitchen, (in addition to the main kitchen), where they are expected to prepare meals. They also have a

laundry room and take responsibility for their own laundry.

A positive development is that the chef cooks daily with the young people. He teaches them to develop balanced menus and prepare healthy meals. All of the young people are positive about this opportunity, and participate fully in the fun and informative sessions.

Young people have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities. There is a snug room with the facilities to play video games and watch films. There is also a games area and a comfortable TV lounge. Young people are members of the local gym, attend football practice, army cadets, and have had piano lessons. There are group meals out, trips to the cinema, and holidays during college breaks. Staff also proactively encourage young people to develop friendships and social networks outside of the home. In this way, young people experience a range of activities and are given opportunities to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are safer as a result of living in this home. Risk assessments are individualised, reviewed and regularly updated. For example, there is a clear risk assessment in respect of the young person currently living in the independent flat that includes fire risks and agreements about friends visiting the flat. Where new risks emerge, managers consider the need for professionals' strategy meetings. In this way, risks are understood and effectively managed.</p> <p>Staff carefully monitor changes in behaviour. They liaise with social workers and specialist services to inform the development of behaviour management strategies. A professional said: 'Staff and managers are proactive in seeking advice and support if they are concerned about a young person's behaviours and safety. In this way they are prepared and able to respond to the concerns in the best way.' Staff use an assessment tool with young people to track progress in relation to emotional welfare and relationships. This means that young people contribute to their assessments.</p> <p>Sanctions and incentives are used constructively to deter challenging behaviours and to celebrate improvements and achievements. The effective use of rewards</p>	

and reparations helps young people to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Staff are experienced in following the missing from home policy and procedures. The manager is very knowledgeable and is part of a multi-agency forum that monitors the impact of the missing policy. Staff maintain contact with, or search for, young people who are absent from the home without permission. Staff are aware of the need for return interviews. Information from return interviews is shared to prevent further missing events and reduce risks. Missing episodes are low and have reduced over time.

There are relatively low numbers of physical restraints. Staff are trained to de-escalate and distract. One member of staff said: 'I have been here a number of years; I have only used physical restraint on one occasion in the past three years. I use humour to defuse situations. We know it is the last resort and can only be used to prevent harm to a young person.' Managers monitor carefully and ensure there are opportunities for young people and staff to debrief and reflect following restraint incidents.

The experienced managers and staff fully adhere to all safeguarding procedures. The manager has made referrals and sought advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer, (LADO). Strong working relationships with a range of safeguarding professionals ensure that staff have access to up-to-date safeguarding information. For example, the LADO is visiting the home to deliver an awareness raising session with all staff. A professional said: 'there is good communication with the home and a good management response to any concerning or reported incidents.'

Young people report that there are a range of ways that they can let staff know their views. There is a suggestions box and weekly residents meetings. Young people also attend children's rights meetings. There have been two complaints by young people that the manager has responded to and resolved. The residents' meetings minutes evidence that young people contribute and that their suggestions and views have influenced decisions about the home. One young person said: 'I feel safe here, I can't fault the home, I would give it 10 out of 10.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager is an experienced manager and has been in this post for three years. He is a qualified social worker and has a master's degree in working with children and families. His thesis covered the use of the social pedagogy model within residential care with children.</p> <p>He has used the principles of social pedagogy in training and development with staff to influence practice. Staff and managers report that the culture of the home has evolved, and that they are working to empower young people. This also fits with the focus of their work, encouraging and enabling young people to develop independence skills.</p> <p>The manager and the deputy manager work well together. The manager said that they, 'offer guidance and advice and consider themselves to be down to earth role models.' Staff confirm that this is the case.</p> <p>Staff receive mandatory training as part of their induction which includes safeguarding training. The deputy manager is the lead for training in the home. He is part of a residential managers training group who are delivering bespoke training for residential staff. For example, staff have received training on child sexual exploitation and missing from home. Staff are also being supported to improve their written communication and report writing skills.</p> <p>There is a range of quality assurance mechanisms to monitor practice and progress. The independent visitor speaks to young people and partners as part of their monitoring. When recommendations are made, the registered manager responds promptly. The manager also monitors case files and observes practice. He shares detailed feedback and actions with staff following case audits. Managers are aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. They are addressing weaknesses and building on established strengths. For example, the manager has successfully negotiated for the emergency admission facility to be withdrawn from this home. This means that there will be increased semi-independent accommodation to develop young people's skills in a safe environment.</p> <p>Staff report that they receive regular supervision. However, there were insufficient, up to date, records to evidence this. A requirement is made to ensure that all staff receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p>	

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015