

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	10/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC032163
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Dorset County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, Colliton Park, DORCHESTER, Dorset, DT1 1XJ

Responsible individual	Timothy Wells
Registered manager	James Collins
Inspector	Jennifer Reed

Inspection date	10/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The young people continue to make some exceptional progress in their development because of the excellent standard of care and support they receive from the staff team and the child-focused leadership and management of their well-run home.</p> <p>Young people's progress significantly enriches the quality of their daily lives. They are becoming more independent as they acquire new skills. Individual young people are mastering dressing themselves, toileting, cooking meals and hanging out their washing. They enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities that are stimulating and fun. Staff encourage young people to eat a healthy and balanced diet, introducing them to new foods and ensuring they consume a sufficient amount at each meal. By helping young people to make choices about their meals, and involving them in cooking, staff successfully support young people to improve their eating habits, eliminating the need for them to attend further dietician appointments.</p> <p>Staff demonstrate an outstanding understanding of the needs of the young people they look after and their priority consideration is ensuring the wellbeing and safety of each young person. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant in their observation of young people and thoughtful about their individual choices and actions.</p> <p>The staff team's focus on 'total communication' is proving very successful in finding effective ways to help young people make significant progress in aspects of their daily lives. For example, identifying when young people are interested in something and using this interest in innovative strategies that result in young people achieving and developing their abilities. Social workers and parents praise the staff team's ability by saying, 'fantastic work with the young person'; and, staff are committed and go 'over and above' in their work'; and, 'parents feel valued and welcome when they come to visit this home'.</p> <p>Staff use social stories to help young people learn, understand and make sense of</p>	

their world. Their home provides young people with a multi-sensory environment that assists them in communicating with others.

Working relationships between the home, parents, schools and other professionals continue to strengthen, resulting in some excellent collaborative work that has led to significant, positive changes in the lives of young people. The Registered Manager, in liaison with the local authority's Virtual School Headteacher, has secured pupil premium funding to purchase i-pads and a symbol supported communication application – Proloquo2Go, aimed to promote young people's language development and increase their communication skills.

Since the previous inspection, effective joint working between the home and other professionals, including 'team around the child' (TAC) planning and consultancy provided to the staff team, has resulted in significant, positive differences in young people's experiences and behaviour. The Registered Manager and his team are enthusiastic about the effectiveness and positive impact of this approach, given the very positive outcomes experienced by particular individuals. For example, a significant reduction in the use of restraint used to keep the young person or others safe. However, to date, the manager has been unsuccessful in attempts to involve the Looked After Children (LAC) nurse team in providing some consultancy to the home, to assist staff in meeting the complex health needs of a young person.

The careful consideration given to a young person who has recently moved into this home and one young person who has left ` their home after a substantial number of years has ensured that these major changes in their respective lives have gone smoothly. Good planning, joint working with families and other professionals, plus working at the individual young people's pace contribute to these successful changes for these individuals. The impact of any new young person coming to live in this home is rigorously assessed and due consideration is given to how this may affect others already living here. Young people moving on into adult services receive good support from the staff team during the initial stages of their move, to provide consistency and support during a potentially anxious time. Staff challenge adult provision if they believe that young people's needs are not being effectively met in their new placements.

The refurbishment and redecoration of the home is a recurrent process, and the building is looking more homely at each inspection. Staff ensure that each unit's accommodation provides the necessary resources and adaptations and meets the preferences of the young people who live therein. A young person's favourite swivel chair can be seen in one sitting room, blankets, soft play areas, sensory equipment and individual belongings, toys and artwork are visible throughout this home, reflecting each young person's unique character.

This home continues to be robustly managed by the Registered Manager and his senior team. The rigorous monitoring of care practice within the home includes the

regular review of the home's records and senior staff working alongside staff on shifts to observe the standard of care provided to young people. The Registered Manager's monitoring report shows an outstanding understanding of the progress and experiences of the young people, and his good understanding of this home's strengths and weaknesses and areas for development.

This home strives for continual improvement and many examples of improvement in outcomes for young people were identified at this inspection. The one recommendation made to ensure all entries in records are signed and dated by the author has been satisfactorily met. The Registered Manager demonstrates a strong interest in using research findings to inform the development of best practice within this home. Staff network with other local authority managers and staff from other children's homes to reflect on the Children's Homes Regulations and Quality standards and to develop care practice in line with these requirements. Delegated duties within the staff team are effectively carried out by senior staff and keyworkers.

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a range of services provided by a local authority. The home is registered to accommodate up to 9 children and young people who have complex learning difficulties and disabilities.

The home provides long term placements for children and young people in accommodation provided by the four distinct units sited within the building. The occupancy levels of each unit are determined by the needs and the mix of the children and young people placed. Suitable equipment and adaptations are provided to meet individual need. Children and young people attend local special educational provision.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/05/2015	CH - Full	Outstanding
16/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
25/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
14/01/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
22/05/2013	CH - Full	Adequate
31/01/2013	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
07/11/2012	CH - Full	Adequate
22/03/2012	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
29/06/2011	CH - Full	Good
07/12/2010	CH - Interim	Good
07/07/2010	CH - Full	Good
22/09/2009	CH - Interim	Good
13/05/2009	CH - Full	Good
14/10/2008	CH - Interim	Good
16/04/2008	CH - Full	Good

13/11/2007	CH - Interim	Good
11/07/2007	CH - Full	Good

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

Recommendations

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

- Beyond local authorities, there are other people, bodies and organisations that have responsibilities towards children in children's homes. In particular, review the availability of the Looked After Children's Nurse to provide regular advice and support to the home's staff in how best to effectively and safely meet children's complex health needs on a daily basis. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 12 paragraph 2.7)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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