

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	11/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC039900
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Council House, Mary Stevens Park, STOURBRIDGE, West Midlands, DY8 2AA

Responsible individual	Merlin Joseph
Registered manager	Mark Bates
Inspector	Andrew Hewston

Inspection date	11/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC039900

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people are extremely well looked after by a strong staff team who consistently are aware of the young people's needs.
- Staff ensure that young people make informed choices about the way that they live including activities and food.
- Young people's health needs are responded to well. Some lose weight and take part in a range of activities that they were previously unable to complete, enhancing their lives.
- Staff have an exceptionally good awareness of medication and pursue the best medical interventions, involving a range of health professionals to ensure this.
- All young people attend school and their achievements celebrated both on noticeboards and within young people's meetings. Parents highlight the level of support that the staff give to their children's education as exceptional.
- Behaviour management systems are centred on the abilities of the young people.
- Safeguarding procedures are well known by the staff team. Two staff are involved in training child protection to other children's service providers to ensure that they are aware of supporting those with communication difficulties.
- The staff team support the steady development of young people.
- Staff are strongly supported by the management team, receiving regular supervisions, appraisals and training.
- Monitoring systems support the home moving forward although the development plan for the home does not show all the improvements completed and planned since the last inspection.

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>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, ensure that the management complete a development plan through the ability to -</p> <p>2 (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	<p>31/12/2015</p>

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is one of five local authority homes. It is registered for up to seven young people with learning disabilities and is situated within an urban area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
18/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
21/11/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>outstanding</p>
<p>Young people enjoy excellent relationships with the staff team. Parents report that their children enjoy being at the home: 'he just loves it, he has staff that he seems to really get on brilliantly with him.'</p> <p>Young people develop while being at the home and in some cases make significant improvements in their abilities. They enjoy living within a relaxed environment where staff have a high awareness of their needs and work consistently to meet these. 'All about me' documentation gives the whole staff team a strong awareness of their likes and dislikes as well as their communication abilities, behaviours and health needs. This documentation, coupled with a consistent staff team ensures that young people are both well cared for and are encouraged to progress.</p> <p>Well thought through activities are consistently completed. Good use is made of community resources, including horse riding, youth clubs and swimming. Two young people have an excellent involvement in a local Zumba exercise class, increasing their confidence and improving their health. The home is very well resourced allowing young people to enjoy a wealth of activities, including crafts, a hot tub, and dark room for relaxation. These ensure that they are always able to be involved with activities.</p> <p>Good contact arrangements develop from their point of admission. Parents state that due to the strong staff support their own families lives have significantly improved, as young people's behaviours improve and families learn new ways to support their child. A parent stated that: 'the family is now able to be a lot closer and visits are good, his brothers now want to spend time with him and aren't scared to be with him anymore.'</p> <p>A healthy lifestyle is promoted at all times and young people have improved in their health while being at the home. Young people have lost weight where necessary and they are fully supported in accessing all necessary health services. A visiting masseuse helps young people to relax and calm.</p> <p>Strong staff support helps young people develop educationally. A social worker stated that staff, 'bend over backwards' in supporting education. Achievements are celebrated, with certificates on display in the entrance hall and in their rooms, supporting their successes. Parents highlight that the support of the staff within parents evenings as being invaluable: 'without them (staff) fighting for him he would have been excluded.'</p>	

The home is a comfortable and pleasant environment where the needs of the young people is fully considered. Bedrooms are highly personalised, with key workers taking a lead in ensuring that young people have a say in their own décor. Areas are available for contact that do not affect others within the home.

Young people are consulted about all aspects of their life at the home. Weekly meetings include young people putting forwards preferences for activities and menus as well as promoting their achievements. Good use is made of differing communication systems and these are well known by the staff team, encouraging young people to be involved with decision-making. Young people are as involved with the review process as possible, with their views being reported and responded to.

Transition arrangements of care from children’s services are fully supported by the staff team. Parents highlight this period as one of high anxiety, worrying that the care available will not compare with that received within the home. Staff have supported young people with visiting new provisions with them, and sharing a wide range of information to ensure a smooth transition.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
<p>Young people are safe within the home through regular checks of all health and safety areas and regular updating of risk assessments. A locality risk assessment is in place. Parents state that their children are safe and that they trust the staff team to look after them. Risk assessments relating to activities and holidays are robust, taking into account a wide range of possible eventualities, ensuring that all aspects of their care are considered. Admission and exit from the building is through a coded system and this further supports the safety of the young people. No young people have gone missing from the home. Staff are aware of procedures in place should such an incident occur.</p> <p>Staff have a strong awareness of how to safeguard young people and how to respond to child protection concerns. Two staff members help to deliver safeguarding training across the local authority, highlighting how to support young people with communication and learning difficulties. No safeguarding concerns have been raised at the home, although staff have been involved with investigations relating to school, supporting young people.</p> <p>Staff respond to challenging behaviours professionally and consistently. This has enabled some young people to significantly decrease their behaviours. Subsequently they experience greater and more settled contact, increases in their</p>	

ability to become involved with activities, decreasing concerns within school and decreases in the need for restraints to take place. Behaviour management plans are regularly updated and clear, highlighting possible triggers and their responses. Bullying behaviours are responded to swiftly with behavioural plans further supporting the welfare of other young people.

Restraints are well recorded and all involved with the young person informed. A colourful rewards tree gives a good visual record of achievements, promoting further successes. Sanctions are not used in the home.

Consistency of the staffing is highlighted with no staff being new to the home since the last inspection. Recruitment checks include a good range of checks being completed to support the safety of young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
<p>An experienced registered manager that has worked within the local authority for 27 years leads the staff team. He is qualified up to level four in social care as well as leadership and management. A social worker states that: 'he runs a tight ship, he comes across as relaxed, which is great for the young people but is actually a real professional who delivers when needed to.'</p> <p>Good monitoring systems are in place, completed by external visitors and by the senior team. The staff respond well to areas requiring development, including a recent redecoration of the front lounge, highlighting the staff's commitment to moving forward. A development plan is in place, although does not include some of the initiatives that have been completed over the year. A previous requirement relating to external monitoring reports is being responded to and all necessary reports are received.</p> <p>The staff team ensure that a range of external support services work with the young people. The staff keep professionals and parents fully up to date with pertinent matters and are always prepared and ready for meetings or feeding back regarding issues relating to the young people.</p> <p>Managers' awareness of the differing needs of the young people, their backgrounds and current arrangements is exceptionally high. Communication within the staff team is strong and ensures that all within the home are aware of how the young people are developing or in need of support. Reviews of care are shared and care planning swiftly updated to continue the consistent care practice.</p>	

The staff team works well in line with the statement of purpose, offering an individualised service that is sought after within the area. Staff feel well supported by the management team, stating that they are always available to discuss issues when they arise. Supervisions and appraisals are completed regularly, supporting staff in their development of care practices. Mandatory training is updated and additional courses such as that completed by a national charity help to develop staff's awareness of autism. Staffing levels are consistently high to meet the young people's needs. Staff work very well together, having a strong awareness of their differing skills and relationships with the young people.

The management have a good awareness of the need to inform external parties in the event of significant events, although these events are exceptionally rare.

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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