

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>07/01/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC489640</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, 50 Topsham Road, EXETER, EX2 4NF</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Lorraine Fox</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Post Vacant</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Norma Welsby</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>07/01/2016</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>
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>

**SC489640**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- This is a well-managed children's home. The manager has applied to Ofsted to be the Registered Manager. Staff have respect for the manager. They feel he is very child-centred and highly supportive of the staff team.
- This home provides highly personalised care that meets the diverse needs of individual children. It specialises in the care of children who are deaf. Staff are suitably trained to communicate effectively with children. They provide children with a really positive and inclusive experience. Many of the staff are deaf and all staff use sign language.
- Really good attention is given to recognising how past experiences have an impact on current behaviour. Staff offer children their unconditional positive regard. In doing so this helps to build trusting relationships that support their personal growth.
- The manager and staff are highly aspirational. They are committed to providing children with a high standard of care. Their ethos is to provide children with a residential care experience that mimics as closely as possible childhood experiences in a family home. They are well supported by the Responsible Individual, who is the former Registered Manager.
- During this inspection it was apparent that the home has made considerable progress in the past five months. The staff team have demonstrated a strong commitment to reflect on their practices and decision making and make improvements to benefit children. There is a development plan in place that identifies further improvements.
- It is recognised by children and staff alike that the physical environment of the home needs improving. It does not present as homely or reflective of the children who live there. Some of the furnishings are old or unsuitable and need replacing. Other shortfalls identified during this inspection include staff induction which does not consistently ensure that all staff benefit from training in all key areas in a timely way. The independent visitor reports do not reflect satisfactory levels of consultation and are not robust enough to effectively contribute to the home identifying and making further improvements.

## 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>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. In particular, induction must be provided in a timely way including training in the management of behaviour and the use of physical restraint. (Regulation 33(1)(a))</p>	14/02/2016
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>Independent person: visits and reports.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month and interviews in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home. (Regulation 44(1)(2)(a))</p>	29/02/2016
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to the comfort and homeliness of the physical environment, the registered person must</p> <p>6(3)(1) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child.</p>	31/03/2016

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a charity that specialises in the education and care of children and young people who are deaf. The home is located adjacent to the school and college. Children can access education from within the company or through a separate provider. The home was registered in July 2015 and is able to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with sensory impairment, a learning disability and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

This is the home's first post-registration inspection.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement

## 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>The home provides children with positive and individualised care. While linked with a residential special school, this small home provides children with the opportunity to live in a more intimate domestic setting. They are able to contribute to day-to-day activities and are involved in decision making. Children make good progress and have a sense of pride and belonging. They are able to be themselves, to play and make positive memories as they catch up on important childhood experiences.</p> <p>Relationships between staff and children are very good. Key to this is their ability to communicate effectively together. Staff also have a very good understanding of each child's life experiences and the impact this has on their current behaviour. There is a lovely sense of empathy and a genuine desire to help young people to make as much progress as they can. Staff are effective in supporting children to improve their behaviour and develop their social skills. Staff have very close links with the school and consequently are able to support education. There is a really good emphasis placed on children receiving fulltime education and where necessary bespoke educational packages are provided. After school activities are based on helping children to grow in confidence, experience enjoyment and learn a variety of new skills. There are opportunities for children to integrate with their peers outside of the school environment, for example in community based clubs.</p> <p>Children are supported to enjoy good health and specialist help is sourced as necessary. The manager has been proactive in challenging and escalating concerns to ensure that the identified needs of children are appropriately met. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective.</p> <p>In recent months the home has established a very thorough and child-centred approach to assessing and admitting new children to the home. Good lessons have been learnt about the necessity of really careful and considered planning. One social worker who has just placed a child at the home said; "I think they have been absolutely brilliant. They have worked really hard to help the child feel welcome and settled. I could not have asked for more. They travelled several times to visit him and also took him back to the home on two occasions including overnight stays so that they could really assess him and he could have the opportunity to really have a good look at the place."</p> <p>Staff are effective in positively managing behaviour. Good attention is given to rewarding children through a token system. Incidents that do occur are reflected on by staff and children. Children are able to recognise where their behaviour is</p>	

unacceptable and how they need to make progress to respond to difficult situations in a more considered and mature way. Where possible, sanctions used are restorative in nature. Their achievements are celebrated. In these ways, staff are treating children with respect and understanding and are helping them to build their emotional resilience and a more positive self-view. Placement plans, while very detailed would benefit from identifying and reflecting progress in these and other areas in addition to the focus placed on positively managing behaviour.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Children live in a safe environment and staff are robust and proactive in their safeguarding practices. There is effective and open partnership working with the placing authority and other agencies and social workers feel that communication from the home is 'excellent'.</p> <p>Staff have an excellent awareness of the vulnerability of the children. Staffing ratios afford good levels of supervision. In turn staff feel well supported by senior staff. When incidents occur, staff are thorough and focussed in their response. A good recording system is developing and there is evidence of debriefs and reflection. During this inspection ways to improve the quality of these records and demonstrate how management oversight continually strives to improve practices, was discussed with the manager.</p> <p>There have been minimal occasions when children have evaded staff supervision. When this has happened there has been a well-coordinated response to secure their safe return. On the one occasion that children were reported missing, they did not benefit from an independent return home interview, although an interview was arranged within the company. The manager has challenged the placing authority about this and part of the problem lies with the long distance away from the service. In this respect, formal arrangements are being put in place to ensure that this expectation is fully met in the future.</p> <p>Staff are effective in using de-escalation techniques and creative strategies to manage behaviour and achieve positive outcomes for children. Restraint is only used as a last resort and at the lowest level possible. Typically, this may involve staff lightly guiding children away from a heated situation. Where possible children are given time and space to calm and staff only seek to intervene if this is risk assessed as necessary. Staff sign to children, encouraging them to calm and ask them to consider what they are about to do. On some occasions this has been effective in preventing damage to the property. Staff receive suitable training and</p>	

all but one recently appointed member of staff had received appropriate training. The importance of the home establishing a clear expectation that all newly appointed staff receive training in the management of behaviour before working directly with young people was discussed with the manager during this inspection.

The selection and vetting of staff is thorough. Records are well organised. Any allegations made against staff are responded to quickly and fairly and information is shared with appropriate agencies. Children are supported and protected and their right to raise concerns upheld.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>This home has been operating for just under six months. During this time it has experienced some difficulties. These have been responded to effectively and there is evidence that lessons have been learnt and good progress has been made.</p> <p>The original Registered Manager has become the Responsible Individual and the former deputy has been promoted to manager and has submitted an application to Ofsted. These arrangements are felt to better fulfil the expectations of both roles and responsibilities. The manager and Responsible Individual have a very close and supportive working relationship and are equally committed to achieving the best outcomes they can for young people. The manager has extensive experience of working in the company's residential service and has a degree in Health and Social Care Management. He is very aspirational for the future of the service and is respected and liked by staff and children.</p> <p>One of the most important lessons the manager and staff team have learnt is the importance of thoroughly assessing children prior to their admission and giving very careful and considered thought to the compatibility of the group and how anticipated issues will be managed. Another lesson has been how to effectively escalate concerns with the placing authority.</p> <p>Currently the home does not feel or look like a family home. The furnishings and colour schemes are drab and some of the furniture is worn and unsuitable. The kitchen is old and shows signs of wear and tear. The staff and children recognise this and want to transform the environment so that it reflects the nurturing ethos and the high standards already in place. Children told the Inspector of several ideas they have to make improvements to their home.</p>	



The manager has a development plan in place. This is a detailed document which identifies targets already met and timescales for the completion of other work. During this inspection it was identified how this could be improved by including objectives that relate to the children. The manager is also aware of his responsibility to provide thorough oversight of records, to ensure both the record and the practice it describes are of a high standard. This includes records relating to serious incidents, children's finances and the children's guide. The manager has completed a very thorough and reflective review of the quality of care the home has provided during the past six months. This reports is an honest reflection of difficulties that have occurred and demonstrates ambitious progress the home intends to make. Independent visits are also being carried out each month. While they are a useful starting point, there is a need for the visitor to consult with children, staff, parents or placing authorities (in loco parentis) to really assess if children are being effectively cared for and safeguarded. In this way they will be able to effectively contribute to the home identifying and making further improvements.

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016