

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>13/01/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC429702</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>The Ryes College Limited</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Aldham Business Centre, New Road, Aldham, COLCHESTER, CO6 3PN</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>James Fischer II</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Sharon Broadley</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Jo Henderson</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>13/01/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Declined in effectiveness</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>Good</b>

## SC429702

### Summary of findings

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

- It provides a warm, nurturing and homely environment.
- A consistent staff group offer supportive care and provide good role models for young people.
- Relationships between staff and young people are positive and mutually respectful.
- Young people understand the boundaries in place and adhere to them.
- Care plans are individualised and frequently updated to reflect changing needs.
- Staff have a good understanding of risk, which is reflected in detailed risk assessments.
- Staff have strong working relationships with professional colleagues and carers, enabling them to offer young people holistic care.
- A multi-agency response has reduced the risk of harm to young people in the wider community.
- Young people say they like living here and consider it home.
- A very able manager leads a strong team of staff who are motivated to make a difference for young people.
- Young people have the opportunity to access a wide range of community and social activities.
- Shortfalls include; some young people are not in education and do not access the provision offered to them in the home. Some young people smoke tobacco in and around the home. Managers do not consistently report allegations made by young people against staff members to the Local Authority Designated Officer in line with the home's safeguarding policy.

## 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>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>(2) (a) (vi) that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with the home's child protection policies, in particular their responsibility to advise the Local Authority Designated Officer of any allegation made against a staff member.</p>	<p>27/01/2016</p>

### Recommendations

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

Ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being, particularly with regard to tobacco use. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 35 paragraph 7.18)

Ensure that staff make every effort to encourage and support young people to maintain routines that ensure they are able to engage with independent study. (The guide to the Quality Standards, page 29 paragraph 5.18)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is one of three children's homes run by a private organisation, which also operates one school. The home provides accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/06/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
23/01/2015	Full	Good
10/06/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/03/2014	Full	Good

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>Staff and managers have worked hard to address the issues raised in relation to the home environment at the last inspection. Rooms now look clean, bright, recently painted and in good repair. Young people have input into the decoration and design of their room and colours chosen. Furnishings and fittings have been renewed and the home now looks attractive and feels comfortable.</p> <p>Young people receive individualised care specific to their needs. Care plans are detailed and regularly updated. Young people are encouraged and enabled to make progress, which external professional colleagues confirm. An independent reviewing officer said of one young person: 'He has come a very long way. From not being able to participate in anything, he is now involved in everything.' A looked after children's nurse added that she has seen this young person make significant progress in terms of developing independence skills, which she described as a 'huge achievement.'</p> <p>A young person who previously demonstrated high levels of risk taking behaviour has successfully reduced the occurrence of such incidents. He has just begun to access therapeutic support. His social worker said: 'Living in the home has made a massive difference to him, before his admission I was really concerned about his welfare.'</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to contribute to their own care planning. Staff are proactive in finding creative ways to enable them to contribute to meetings and reviews, in order to express their views. Staff consult with them at house meetings about the running of the home, menus and activities. As part of transition, a new young person and current residents had the opportunity to meet first to see if they thought they could live together.</p> <p>Young people have positive relationships with a consistent group of staff, who they say they like and respect. The gender mix ensures that there are strong positive role models for both sexes. Staff speak about the young people with warmth and care and demonstrate a firm but fair approach to managing behaviour.</p> <p>Some young people attend education regularly and are progressing well. Staff have been proactive in accessing the appropriate provision to meet the needs of a young person with specific learning requirements. This has greatly improved his chances of academic success. Other young people are not accessing education on a regular basis. Although staff can evidence that they have made extensive efforts</p>	

to obtain a school placement, one young person remains without suitable arrangements for education.

Young people have opportunities to access social activities within the wider community, which links to reinforcing and rewarding positive behaviour. There are photographs around the home showing them enjoying leisure activities and days out.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle and support young people to make positive choices around diet and exercise. Although there is evidence that young people have reduced their use of alcohol and illegal drugs, some continue to smoke and are quite open with regard to their use of and addiction to tobacco.

Staff work hard to ensure transitions are managed well; young people are prepared to move into the home or on to another placement. A recent move for a young person with particularly complex needs was carefully considered in every aspect, specifically around the likely impact of the move. Although the move still proved difficult, careful planning and joint working meant that disruption was managed as well as possible.

Some young people are a long way from home. Staff promote and enable positive contact with families wherever possible in order to maintain links. In some instances, staff facilitate this within the home, assisting family members with travel accordingly. Young people have moved to successful independent contact with family members in the community, sometimes a considerable distance away.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Each young person has a behaviour management plan in place, which is individual to them. Positive, negative and risk taking behaviours are identified. To encourage young people to engage with improving behaviour, staff set targets and link them to earning rewards, such as activities. Each area of risk is highlighted and detail is added and graded according to individual circumstances. The resulting management strategies are designed to reduce and negate risk posed. Linking to the behaviour management plan gives young people a sense of responsibility in reducing their own risks.</p> <p>Serious incidents including young people missing from care have reduced. Staff have worked proactively with multi-agency colleagues in response to a specific set of concerns in the local community. As a result, staff and young people are more informed of risk, particularly around child sexual exploitation. Overall, young</p>	

people make safer choices. There is a multi-agency strategy in place, which provides additional safeguards. Staff and managers have been proactive in enforcing this.

The manager assesses new admissions to the home carefully and in detail prior to placements being agreed. This is to ensure that an informed decision is made as to whether the home can meet a young person's needs. Consideration is given to any risk new admissions may pose to young people already living there. This is having a positive effect, as there have been no recent incidents of bullying reported.

Physical restraint is used rarely and proportionately. Every incident is recorded in detail and is overseen by the manager and specialist trainer. All those involved have the opportunity to de-brief and learning is disseminated throughout the staff group. There have been no recent incidents where it has been necessary to restrain the young people. Staff know the young people well enough to avoid situations escalating and are able to resolve difficult situations by other means.

Young people have made some serious allegations about staff members, which they have later retracted. Each allegation has been investigated and recorded in the allegations and complaints logs. The organisation has a clear safeguarding policy in place but staff have not always followed guidance accordingly. Particularly with regard to informing the Local Authority Designated Officer. This does not ensure a clear audit of consultation and decision making.

All staff members undertake mandatory safeguarding training as an integral part of new employee's induction, which is regularly reviewed and refreshed.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The registered manager has been in post since 2012. She has a level five qualification in leadership and management and a higher level qualification in therapeutic communications.</p> <p>The manager is focused on meeting the needs of the young people living in the home and offering them a high standard of care. She leads a strong and committed staff group by example, knowing the young people well and ensuring their needs come first. The home is fully staffed but the manager is shortly to recruit to an extra post to cover leave and sickness. This is to ensure young people always have consistency of care, which is currently managed by the existing staff group covering shifts. When extra staffing is required in exceptional circumstances, ex-employees, also known to the young people are used.</p>	



The manager challenges other agencies appropriately if responses are not effective. For example, the proactive and assertive way the home continues to advocate for an appropriate placement for the young person not in school. The manager has refused to take a placement that, in her view, would compromise the stability of current residents.

The staff group are experienced and able and most have worked within the organisation for many years. Supervision, both practical and reflective, takes place on a regular basis and is of good quality. In addition, staff say that the registered manager, deputy manager and head of care are available for consultation at all times. An experienced member of staff has recently undergone specialist supervision training in order that she too can supervise colleagues. A therapist employed by the organisation offers clinical supervision and attends team meetings. She will be working with managers and staff to develop their 'secure base' model and improve how outcomes and progress are measured.

There is a full training programme in place to flag when refreshers are due. Staff members are responsible for ensuring they keep up to date and the manager has oversight of the whole programme. Multi-agency training has also taken place. For example, police colleagues have delivered 'signs of safety' training to the team.

Professional relationships are of a good standard. Colleagues are complimentary about the work of the home and the difference this makes to the experience of the young people living there. The manager is proactive in developing and improving multi-agency links, as evidenced by the preventative work to reduce risk in the community. Parents and carers are very positive about the inclusive way they are consulted and involved. One parent said: 'I cannot praise the staff enough; all of them. My husband agrees; anything worrying me and I could talk to them. They are always there for us.'

The manager understands the strengths of the home and staff group and is aware of areas that require improvement. She has addressed the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Staff are clear about the aims, objectives and ethos of the home and work hard to ensure that they deliver this consistently. The manager has a development plan in place, focused on improving several key areas of provision. There are also new key initiatives, within the organisation, that aim to enhance the overall service provided.

## 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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