

Children's homes - interim inspection

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| Inspection date | 23/03/2016 |
| Unique reference number | SC039213 |
| Type of inspection | Interim |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |
| Registered manager | Abubakaar Sesay |
| Inspector | Jacqueline Graves |

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| Inspection date | 30/03/2016 |
| Previous inspection judgement | Good |
| 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>At the full inspection, this home was judged Good. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has Sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The home has experienced a period of stability since the full inspection in May 2015 in terms of little change to the staffing and management team, a low number of incidents of challenging behaviour and no complaints.</p> <p>The registered person has made reasonable progress in meeting four of the five requirements set at the last inspection. The updated statement of purpose provides people with current information about the home's intentions. Essential maintenance work makes a safer environment for young people and staff. Supervision and appraisal are ongoing to help staff reflect on their performance and identify any training needs. A new development plan helps identify what the home hopes to achieve in the near future.</p> <p>The registered manager undertook a very thorough assessment of the local area to ensure it is a suitable location for a children's home. This looks in depth at facilities, which may be of use to young people as well as any areas of concern. Young people like living in this location and find it safe compared to other areas of London. One says 'lovely areas'.</p> <p>The home has partly met one requirement relating to education. Staff make some efforts to secure education arrangements, such as sending emails to social workers and working with designated teachers, but not always with successful outcomes. There is scope for more effective challenge to ensure all young people receive the minimum hours of education to which they are legally entitled. Currently, attendance and progress varies. For example, one young person attends full time provision regularly; another has been out of full time education for five months; and another attends their placement irregularly with low attendance rates, but this is an improvement from not attending at all before coming to live in the home. Not all young people are making sufficient progress.</p> <p>Those not in education, do not receive sufficient support to learn informally or access educational and training support while waiting to find an educational placement. The lack of purposeful occupation and direction during the day allows a</p> | |

few young people to 'drift' and potentially contributes to their involvement in risky behaviour during unstructured days.

Young people like living in the home and feel safe. They get on with each other and with staff and do not find bullying an issue. One says the best thing about the home is 'the company of other young people'. Another says, 'Staff are polite and do everything to help me.' They enjoy doing activities as a group with staff such as going to the cinema or out for a meal; some would like more of these type of activities more frequently.

Young people get the support they need to begin to address problems, which may affect their health and wellbeing. For example, they attend appointments with substance misuse workers and the majority took part in a drug and alcohol workshop in the home. Some experience a reduction in episodes of going missing after moving into the home. However, when missing episodes have occurred, they have not always received an independent interview on their return, which is particularly crucial for those at high risk of sexual exploitation or involvement in criminal activity.

Young people like their rooms and most of the building. A few find the bathroom fairly basic. The computer room would benefit from further decoration and furnishings. A few aspects of the home detract from the homely atmosphere. For example, information on a noticeboard stereotypes looked after young people and lack of lightshades in a few rooms and numbers on bedroom doors appear institutional.

Regular visits, conducted by an independent visitor, help monitor what goes on in the home. However, the visitor doesn't explicitly comment on young people's safety and wellbeing as required.

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to six young people of either sex who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 12/05/2015 | Full | Good |
| 24/11/2014 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 18/06/2014 | Full | Adequate |
| 26/03/2014 | Interim | Good progress |

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>8. The education standard:</p> <p>(1) In order to meet the education standard so that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>(ii) support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>(iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>(iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>(v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>(vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>(vii) raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;</p> <p>(viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible.</p> <p>This in particular relates to effective challenge and partnership with the relevant virtual schools and the local education authority. Also, to involve young people with other learning in the home and the community.</p> | 30/04/2016 |

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| The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether-children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4) (a) (b) (7) (a)) | 30/04/2016 |
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, paragraph 9.30, page 45)
- Ensure that the home seeks as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression, with specific reference to reviewing use of bedroom door numbering, lack of lightshades, décor in the bathroom, the content of the young people's noticeboard, and soft furnishings and decoration in the computer room. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, paragraph 3.9, page 15)

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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