

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26 April 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1224674</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Amy Merchant</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Phillip Morris</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26 April 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>Good</b>

**1224674**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Education is a key priority. Young people achieve excellent attendance at school, and they are making good progress.
- The registered manager and staff are nurturing and caring, and provide a high quality of care.
- The health needs of young people are met to a consistently high standard, with particular focus upon promoting healthy lifestyles, especially with regard to diet and exercise.
- Good and effective relationships are in place with key partner agencies. These relationships are effective in supporting the progress being made by young people.
- The views, rights and entitlements of the young people are respected and valued. Young people know their rights and how to complain, and have trusted adults to turn to if required.
- The registered manager is fully committed to supporting the staff team to enhance and develop excellent services, demonstrating a focus on continuous improvement and being outward looking.
- Staff members are accountable in their work with young people. They receive good-quality support, supervision and oversight of their work.
- The young people enjoy a comfortable and homely environment, personalised to their own tastes, and they can be proud to live in this home.
- Two shortfalls have been identified. The registered manager has not ensured that compatibility assessments take into account the impact on all the residents of the behaviours of new young people coming to live at the home. Additionally the manger has not ensured that all agency staff are appropriately qualified.



## 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 '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>6: The quality and purpose of care standard            In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must—</p> <p>(2)(b) ensure that staff—</p> <p>(ii) protect and promote each child's welfare;</p> <p>With specific regard to ensuring that each child's needs are considered when admitting new children to the home.</p>	<p>9 June 2016</p>

### Recommendations

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

- The registered person should have a workforce strategy that records the training and continuing professional development needs and achievements of those employed in the home, including the home's manager; and with regard to ensuring agency staff working in the home are qualified to the appropriate level ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who have autism and learning disabilities. The home is privately owned and managed, and provides services mainly to local authorities.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

## 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>This is the first full inspection of this home, which was registered and opened in February 2016.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff provide a high standard of individualised care to the young people. They have quickly created a homely, nurturing environment with a friendly and positive atmosphere. Treated with respect and dignity, young people are placed at the centre of good care practice. A young person stated: 'It's good here, staff are nice and help me, they look after me, we have fun.' This results in young people feeling valued and benefiting from good relationships with staff.</p> <p>Young people's progress in education is a key priority for the registered manager and staff. All the young people attend the registered school on site. Excellent attendance at school is achieved, and they are making progress. For example, one young person, who found attending school challenging, is now achieving 100% attendance and finding learning enjoyable. Young people's progress is supported by good communication and coordination between education and care staff. The two staff groups meet each morning to discuss individual young people. This ensures that education staff are aware of any concerns, or positives, for the young person from the preceding evening. Additionally, regular monthly meetings are held to set educational and achievement targets for the young people. Familiar care staff remain with the young person throughout the school day to provide consistent and well-coordinated care. Consequently, the young people are enjoying school, increasing their confidence and making good progress with learning.</p> <p>Young people are actively engaging in community activities helping them develop new skills, confidence and self-esteem. These activities include attending a youth club, learning archery and participating in sporting activities. They are also, to their credit, working hard to achieve the bronze Duke of Edinburgh award through undertaking community work to improve their local area. This has helped them become and feel part of the local community.</p> <p>The religious and cultural heritage of young people is valued and promoted. For</p>	

those young people with religious beliefs, staff fully support them to attend church and to be part of the wider religious community. Individual diversity and culture is celebrated. The registered manager and staff ensure that there is respect for the cultural identity of the young person's family, and this respect is reflected in the care provided. Consequently, young people's needs are met to a good standard in this regard.

Young people's health and well-being needs are met to a good standard. The young people consistently receive primary healthcare services, with all having routine appointments with the GP, dentist and optician. Specialist healthcare, through speech therapy, occupational therapy, and music and art therapy is provided regularly to young people. For example, physical education lessons at school and home are guided by the occupational therapist to help improve young people's cognitive and physical coordination. The registered manager and staff are seeking to benefit from research regarding the effect of diet on the digestive system and links to autism. They have made significant inroads into reducing added sugar and the use of processed foods. This is a result of the health and well-being of young people being a key priority.

Young people's views, rights and entitlements are valued, respected and upheld. Young people have access to independent advocates who visit the home regularly, and listen to their views and ideas. Weekly house meetings take place, where important issues such as relationships, menus and recreational activities are discussed. Young people know how to complain, and they have access to a range of professionals if they are worried about any aspect of their care. As a result, young people know that they are both listened to and treated with respect.

Effective and bespoke plans improve young people's independence and life skills. The registered manager and staff are ambitious for, and fully committed to, optimising and developing the life skills of young people. To this end, they have structured programmes to support young people to learn and develop new skills and abilities. Young people are being supported to undertake daily tasks such as laundry, shopping, budgeting, cooking and accessing community facilities. The staff continually review the strengths and abilities of young people, and adjust plans to drive continued improvement.

Since the opening of the service, three young people have come to live at the home, with no one leaving. The registered manager has not ensured that an adequate compatibility risk assessment is completed when young people come to live at the home. Assessment records list behaviours, but do not fully consider the potential



impact of these behaviours on the young people already resident. This can restrict staff in providing the best possible care to all young people and prevents the suitability of each placement receiving effective evaluation prior to young people moving into the home.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people are safe living in this home. Staff members promote their welfare and put the young people first, they have good, established relationships. There are good risk management plans that are well understood and implemented by staff, effectively protecting the young people from harm. Young people do not go missing and they receive good levels of supervision from the staff team. This is achieved through high levels of staffing.</p> <p>Young people benefit from living in a comfortable, homely and safe environment. The property was refurbished prior to young people moving into the home, and is well equipped and comfortable. Young people's rooms are well decorated and reflect the young people's personalities, with posters and pictures of family friends and those close to them. The registered manager and staff have ensured that the home benefits from the development of a designated independent living and skills room. Young people, with the support of staff, use this room to practice cooking and washing clothes. This means that they can enjoy and be proud of their home, which is both comfortable and designed to support young people in all areas of their development.</p> <p>The behaviour of young people is well managed. Staff members provide an environment of high praise, warmth and acceptance. This, together with well-developed behaviour management plans, which are regularly updated and understood by the staff team, promotes positive behaviour. As a result, staff have not needed to resort to sanctions, consequences or restorative methods of behaviour management. Young people are relaxed and comfortable in the presence of staff, with plenty of hugs, fun and laughter. This leads to care practice where</p>	

praise and acceptance are fundamental, and consequences are rare. Young people thrive as a result.

The registered manager and staff have helped young people to overcome debilitating anxieties and worries effectively. For example, one young person had been fearful and reluctant to access bathrooms. Through sensitive individual work, the young person has overcome this fear. She will happily use bathrooms alone, and even takes pride in cleaning the bathroom area. A further example involved a young person who would become distressed at the sound of the fire alarm. Through effective individual help, this young person is now a student fire marshal, supporting the registered manager to check the alarm system and extinguishers. Both these young people, with the support of staff, have overcome their fears and, as a result, are more confident.

The registered manager and staff work well with partner agencies, especially local authorities. Good and effective communication ensures that plans for young people are aimed at meeting their needs. This keeps them safe and promotes their welfare. A social worker stated: 'Communication is very good, overall, and the home comes straight back to me and provides me with required information.' Looked after reviews and professionals' meetings take place within the timescales, and this supports the professional group to remain focused upon meeting young people's needs.

Staff members understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of keeping young people safe. Staff members receive regular training in various aspects of safeguarding practice. They understand what to do if they are concerned that a young person is being harmed in any way. The service has a full range of safeguarding policies and procedures in place that are regularly updated, in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. These guide and enhance staff practice, which, in turn, helps to keep young people safe.

Young people are protected through robust recruitment and vetting of new staff members. New staff members are carefully selected through a rigorous recruitment process. This reduces the risk of young people being harmed by those in positions of trust.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>An ambitious and committed registered manager leads this service. The registered manager is suitably qualified, with a level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She is well supported by a very experienced and knowledgeable deputy manager. They communicate well and have a shared ambition to provide the best possible care to young people.</p> <p>The registered manager has a clear understanding of the plans for each young person. She understands the importance of staff reviewing and updating care and placement plans. Of crucial importance, the registered manager ensures that these plans are implemented. For example, the registered manager wanted to improve young people’s interaction with other young people in the wider community, and for them make friends. The young people are now attending youth clubs, making friends in the wider community and benefiting from engaging in a broader range of community activities.</p> <p>Young people receive good care from a staff group that receives good supervision, training and support. Supervision sessions are well structured, with a clear agenda, which focuses on the needs of young people, and the training and developmental needs of the worker. The wider organisation has a graduated career progression structure in place. This means that, as the staff develop their knowledge and skills, they have the opportunity for career progression within the organisation. Those permanent staff who are not yet qualified to the level 3 diploma in care are currently undertaking the course, and are well on their way to successful completion.</p> <p>The young people benefit from high ratios of staff on duty. Good levels of staffing ensure that staff are available to support young people while they are attending education. They can take young people out to various activities and be constantly available to provide support. The service has had to utilise the services of agency social care workers. The registered manager has not ensured that agency staff coming into the home have the level 3 diploma in care. A recommendation has been made to reflect this shortfall.</p> <p>Staff members enjoy mutually respectful and professional relationships with each other. Regular staff meetings take place at which staff are free to voice their</p>	

opinions, ideas and views. This provides for a positive and open working environment where staff feel listened to and valued. One member of staff stated: 'I am always listened to by my managers and they praise me. The manager here is brilliant, as are the team leaders. They pass on knowledge.' As a result, staff feel valued, nurtured and well supported in their care of young people.

Robust and effective monitoring of the quality of care takes place. An independent person visits the home monthly and reviews the quality of care provided. This identifies areas of practice that require improvement and the strengths of the home. The registered manager welcomes these visits, seeing them as crucially important to continued service development. Additionally, the manager utilises information derived from compliments and feedback from partner agencies, young people's meetings and team meetings to review the quality of care provided by the service.

The registered manager has reviewed and amended the statement of purpose. This document is comprehensive and accurately describes the services provided by the home. Additionally, it ensures that key stakeholders, including parents and carers, remain well informed and updated regarding the aims and objectives of the service.

## 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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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