

## **Children's homes inspection – Full**

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26 April 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1225887</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Patricia Clinton</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Lucy Chapman</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>Requires improvement</b>
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
<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>

**1225887**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is requires improvement because:**

- Staff have insufficient ambition for the educational progress of children, particularly when children are excluded from school. If children do not wish to engage in education, they are allowed not to do so. Staff lack determination and persistence in supporting children to learn.
- Staff fail to engage with the professional services supporting children, especially their schools, and child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS). This disrupts partnership working, and means that staff lack specialist knowledge and understanding to support children's care.
- The home does not consistently follow decisions in local authority placement plans in the provision of children's care. This undermines thoughtful professional decision making in respect of children, and fails to follow care instructions from a contracted provider.
- Records and children's files lack key information to support effective care. Information and reports from specialist agencies are missing, meaning that staff are not equipped with all available knowledge and understanding to guide care provision.
- Staff supervision is regular, but does not sufficiently evidence reflection on practice and discussion of childcare issues. Children's views are not sought to inform staff appraisals.
- Staff regularly consult with children to ascertain their views, wishes and feelings. However, children do not always receive a response to their suggestions or understand why decisions are made.

## **The children's home strengths**

- Caring relationships between staff and children were observed throughout the inspection. Consistent staff who know the children well provide warm, nurturing care which supports children's emotional well-being.
- Praise and recognition of positive achievements, big and small, are intrinsic to all aspects of caregiving. Reward charts, records of daily achievement and abundant praise both help children to develop self-esteem and support positive behaviour development.
- Staff demonstrate good understanding and awareness of safeguarding procedures. Children live in a safe environment and become safer due to the care provided to them.
- Ample one-to-one time with staff enables children to develop trusted relationships. Children say that they like staff. They find it easy to share their concerns with them, and receive the advice and support that they need.
- Staff work hard to engage children with activities. Children try out new activities with staff support and develop new interests and skills. Children join clubs, engage in charity events and develop a sense of belonging in their community.
- The home proactively supports children's contact arrangements. Staff support children effectively to attend contact sessions and to ensure their safety while they do so.

## 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Maintain case records for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child (Regulation 36(1)(a)).	10 June 2016
Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met 5. In meeting the quality standards, the registered provider must, and must ensure that staff— (d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. In particular, that the home works in partnership with children's schools and CAMHS services.	10 June 2016
The quality and purpose of care standard 6. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(b)(ix) make decisions about day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans In particular, that local authority placement plans are adhered to.	10 June 2016
The education standard 8. In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(a)(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 return to school as soon as possible;	10 June 2016

## Recommendations

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

- Ensure that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2).
- Ensure that staff appraisals take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the past year and children in the home's care ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5).
- Ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children from eight to 18 years of age, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the first inspection of a newly registered home.		

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>There is insufficient ambition from staff in respect of children's education. The home does not demonstrate effective engagement with children's educational plans. When excluded children refuse to engage in education, this is accepted. Poor liaison with educational specialists and children's schools mean that staff fail to pursue opportunities to explore alternative educational strategies. Staff lack determination and persistence in supporting children to learn, compounding children's educational deficit.</p> <p>Excluded children, in theory, have a structured daily plan with education activities during school hours. Observation during the inspection evidenced that these were adhered to inconsistently. Staff follow children's lead, resulting in significant educational hours spent on an X-Box. Staff boundaries are not sufficient to support children to engage with their planned daily routines. An independent reviewing officer commented, 'I am concerned that staff are constantly appeasing children'.</p> <p>The home fails to engage with specialist agencies that support children. Where local authority placement plans identify ongoing CAMHS support, there is no liaison with CAMHS and no CAMHS reports in children's file information. Further to this, placement plans completed by the home fail to record children's mental health needs.</p> <p>Children build trusted relationships with consistent staff who know them well. They settle and develop a sense of belonging. A child said, 'I like all the staff, they have fun with me we play football together and the X-Box.' Nurturing staff enable children to express their feelings and share their worries, supporting healthy emotional development. The inspector observed warm, caring relationships between staff and children throughout the inspection.</p> <p>Children have many opportunities to express their views and participate in decisions about their life. They know how to complain, but have made no complaints. Children choose their meals, the activities they undertake and contribute their ideas to develop the home. Despite the strong emphasis on listening to children, a lack of formal systems to provide a response means that</p>	



children were sometimes uncertain of the outcome of their suggestions and the reasons for the decisions made.

Proactive working with local community groups supports disengaged children to participate. Children try out new activities with staff assistance. They attend football clubs, youth clubs, boxing training and participate in charity events. Children learn new skills, build peer relationships and develop a sense of belonging in their community.

A significant strength of the home is the recognition of children's achievements. Achievements, big and small, are recorded and celebrated. Children read and sign their daily achievement books and take pride in their progress. One child proudly said, 'I'm improving my behaviour'. A social worker said, 'I can really see his progress; he has been less challenging and his behaviour has improved'. Recognising positive achievement with praise, woven through day-to-day life, supports the development of children's positive behaviour and self-esteem. The home promotes children's contact arrangements, supporting children to attend contact sessions and ensuring their safety while they do so. However, children's records contain insufficient information regarding their heritage. The description of one child's cultural identity is merely 'white'. Superficial knowledge and understanding limits the ability of staff to promote children's identity, heritage and positive sense of self.

	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 become safer because of the support provided to them. They develop trusted relationships with staff. Regular key-work sessions, alongside well-supervised daily care, provide children with formal and informal opportunities to talk with staff, share their concerns and receive the advice and support they require.</p> <p>Children receive help to manage their feelings and behaviour. Behaviour plans address children's individual needs and include their views. Staff understand children's behavioural triggers and demonstrate effective behaviour management with a strong focus upon de-escalation. Restraint is used only where absolutely necessary. It is well recorded and monitored, including effective management reflection with the staff and children involved. Children understand why any</p>	

restraint was required, helping them to reflect upon their behaviour and to develop an increased sense of personal responsibility.

All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training. This includes training on how to combat child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, and in online safety. Newly introduced training also equips staff with awareness of female genital mutilation and the reporting duties.

A clear 'missing from home' policy provides effective guidance where children are missing. In addition, individualised 'missing' risk assessments provide a clear plan of action, personalised to each child's needs. Children with a history of absconding settle and change their behaviour. There have been no incidents of children missing.

Children's risk assessments address their individual needs. Ongoing review means that risk assessments remain relevant and suitable. Staff protect children while equipping them to keep themselves safe. Children demonstrate online safety and 'stranger danger' awareness, taught by staff. Children feel confident to seek support from staff if they have safety concerns.

Staff are clear about child protection procedures and share concerns immediately with relevant authorities. This results in effective action to keep children safe. A clear policy guides the reporting of allegations. No allegations have been made.

The home has established positive links with its local police community support officer and police missing person's officer, providing a specialist source of advice and information to support children's safety. Links with the local safeguarding children board provide additional advice and up-to-date safeguarding training for staff.

Efficient oversight of health and safety and maintenance ensures that children live in a safe, high-quality environment.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>A suitably qualified and registered manager leads this home. She has achieved the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare, enhanced by the level 3 designated safeguarding officer qualification. This is the manager's first registered management position. She brings extensive experience in the field of childcare and as a deputy manager.</p> <p>A sufficient and stable staff team provides consistent care. Staff recruitment is thorough and prioritises safeguarding. Full induction equips new staff and ongoing training provides them with specialist knowledge to meet children's needs.</p> <p>The registered manager and all staff say that they feel well supported. All receive regular supervision. However, this does not always evidence discussion about children and reflection upon practice. Staff appraisal evaluates working practice and sets targets for ongoing development. It does not include feedback from children and professionals, missing opportunities to maximise quality assurance and practice development.</p> <p>The registered manager makes child centred-decisions about children coming to live at the home. However, when children transfer from other homes within the organisation, formal matching procedures are not undertaken. In addition, the transfer of information between homes is ineffective. Children's files lack information and reports from specialist agencies, meaning that staff are not equipped with all available knowledge and understanding to guide care provision.</p> <p>The registered manager monitors the day-to-day functioning of the home effectively. However, the monitoring of children's progress is less vigorous, resulting in a lack of action to address issues and concerns when children are not making progress.</p> <p>The home does not evidence proactive work with partner agencies to support children's progress. For excluded children, the home fails to complete educational work set by schools and to return this for marking, undermining the placement plan of the placing authority.</p> <p>Monthly reports monitor children's progress and evidence that, in some areas, particularly in respect of behaviour, children are making good progress. The</p>	

registered manager does not demonstrate sufficient challenge and exploration of alternative strategies when children are not making progress. Rather, when plans do not work they are abandoned, with no alternatives in place. The home fails to be the 'pushy parent' to the children in its care.

## 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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