

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	07/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC011185
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Calcot Services For Children
Registered provider address	Pond View, Wokingham Road, Reading RG10 0SB

Responsible individual	Rachel Redgwell
Registered manager	Mary Smith
Inspector	Emeline Evans

Inspection date	07/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
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>This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The young people continue to thrive in a nurturing and inclusive environment where they feel safe and well supported. Through observations and discussions with young people, it was evident that they have and are continuing to form solid and positive attachments with the staff team. This is an area that young people have previously struggled with. One young person has recently made the transition into the independent side of the children's home from another home in the organisation. During the inspection, her demeanour was seen to glow with pride. She has already made some positive attachments with the staff team. The independence that she is now experiencing has enabled her self-esteem to excel. She is now confident and able, after a short period, to achieve in areas in which she had previously felt that she would not be capable of achieving.</p> <p>Since the last inspection in February 2016, the home has experienced three young people leaving the home and three admissions. Two of the young people who were in placement at the time of the last inspection remain living in the home. There was a well-planned positive move to independent living for one young person. Staff worked collaboratively with the placing authority and young person to ensure that the young person was supported and prepared to make this transition. Decisions have been made to end two placements due to the home not being able to meet the young people's needs. The impact of their behaviour on other young people at this time was significant and placed young people at risk. This was not an easy decision for the management team, and there is evidence that the staff team worked with professionals and the young people in trying to sustain these placements. Staff work with professionals to ensure that they have information prior to placement. The home has been proactive in acquiring information from the necessary people to determine whether they are able to support a young person. This information now ensures that staff and managers are equipped to make decisions as to whether the placement is suitable for the young person.</p> <p>There have been significant reductions in risky behaviours and instances of young people going missing in recent weeks. In April 2016, the management team was asked to attend a meeting organised by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, due to concerns of the local police that levels of missing from the home were high.</p>	

The home has worked very closely with all involved, and this was felt to be an extremely positive experience by professionals spoken with during this inspection. As a result of this meeting, the teams have had an impact together on ensuring that information is being shared effectively in order to keep young people safe. This has opened up additional resources to the staff and young people in the home, including access to the emotional health academy. The local neighbourhood officer commented on how well staff work with him, and said that police are only called out as a last resort. He stated, 'It feels like a home in here, and staff are brilliant.' When there have been concerns about young people using illegal substances, staff have taken appropriate action and involved a range of professionals to try to change and challenge these behaviours. Room searches are conducted when staff have concerns. This has continued for one young person on a regular basis for approximately six weeks. This has been risk assessed. However, there has not been consideration to determine whether the searches are effective and when and how they may be reduced. Nor has there been consideration about how to prepare this young person who is due to move into semi-independent living in the next few weeks.

Since the last inspection, there have been some staff changes with vacant positions being filled. The management team is aware of the impact of these changes, and a focus has been on building new relationships and forming attachments. To begin this process, staff have ensured that quality time is spent with young people. Young people spoken with feel that the staff are good, and one stated, 'They listen to me.' Any shortfalls on the rota are covered by regular bank and agency staff known to the young people. Agency staff's skills complement those of the staff team. However, agency staff profile information is inconsistent and does not include, in some cases, training completed. This lack of information does not enable training and skills to be taken into account fully prior to arranging shifts. In particular, training with regard to safeguarding children has not been explored.

Young people are supported in imaginative ways to make progress across several areas of their lives, particularly their behaviour. The need to use physical intervention has decreased due to detailed evaluation of triggers for behaviours and consequent implementation of strategies. This has included an identification that the presence of male night staff has triggered incidents because of young people's past experiences, and female staff have now been placed in this side of the house. There is a proactive approach that ensures that young people are happy and feel safe.

External monitoring is carried out by an independent visitor and internal monitoring by the manager. This gives challenge, reflects an awareness of any crucial issues and identifies any trends. There is extensive evaluation and monitoring of the professional support and care that young people receive. It is evident that the manager and staff team intend to improve the experiences for young people in the home further. Staff have positive and realistic aspirations for young people. Young people are positive about the quality of care that they receive and describe the home as 'awesome and cool'.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered for up to seven young people and is owned and managed by a private organisation. The home caters for young people who have a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home aims to offer a service that supports young people to reflect on and heal from their traumatic experiences, and has the overall aim of preparing young people to be ready to leave care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/10/2015	Full	Good
29/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/07/2014	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that regular room searches are kept under review to confirm that they are appropriate and effective ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20)
- Ensure that the qualifications and skills of external agency staff are taken into account before they commence work. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

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 that 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 whom 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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