

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	5 July 2016
Unique reference number	1159884
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Spark Of Genius North East Llp
Registered provider address	King Edwin School, Mill Lane, Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland, TS20 1LG

Responsible individual	Zak McIlhargey
Registered manager	Stephen McGill
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	5 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

1159884

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are cared for by a nurturing, committed staff team.
- Behaviour management is dealt with in a planned and consistent manner.
- Staff and the management team understand the importance of including children and young people in the planning of their care.
- Recruitment processes are robust.
- Contact with family and friends is recognised as important to children and young people and is encouraged, supported and supervised when necessary.
- Young people have made progress from their starting points in a relatively short period of time.
- Relationships with professionals are valued and developing well.
- The home is spacious and well maintained with good facilities for group and individual living.
- Recording systems are robust, accurate and clear, allowing important information about the young person to be available to staff.

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>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and (b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. <p>(Regulation 16(1)(a)(b))</p>	4 August 2016
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) is instigated; or (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. <p>(Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))</p>	7 July 2016
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year, taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard):</p> <p>(2) When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person.(Regulation (46)(1)(2))</p>	4 August 2016
<p>The registered person must—</p>	14 July 2016

<p>(a) maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; (b) ensure that the records are kept up to date; and (c) retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation (37)(1)(2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	
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Recommendations

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

- The registered person should only accept placements for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The specific responsibilities of the home towards supporting the health and well-being of each child should be agreed with the placing authority and recorded in the child's placement plan. It is the joint responsibility of the registered person and the placing authority that this is agreed at the time of placement. In particular, this relates to evidence of when decisions have been taken by the placing authority with regard to young people self-administering medication. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.7)
- The registered person must have systems in place so 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. In particular, supervision must be carried out within appropriate timescales. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The children's guide should help children to understand how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, to ensure that staff receive training in whatever areas are necessary to support young people who have specific issues arising from their earlier experiences. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

A private provider manages and operates this children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the first inspection		

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>This is the first inspection of the home that registered in early 2016. They began operating on 21 March 2016. The house is large, well decorated and maintained. The facilities have space for communal and individual activities and the external grounds provide opportunities for sport and gardening. The result is that young people have access to activities that can be safely supervised within the grounds. This promotes a sense of enjoyment and well-being.</p> <p>Young people have positive relationships with a caring, committed staff team. The atmosphere of the home is warm and nurturing and this enables young people to experience a sense of belonging and trust with adults working at the home. A local authority reviewing officer said, 'Staff are warm and have a good understanding of the young people'. Key-worker sessions offer the opportunity for young people to explore issues in a safe environment. Young people contribute to their care plans on a regular basis. The impact is that they begin to understand their situation and how to achieve positive outcomes.</p> <p>Education is promoted within the home. One young person has just completed his SATs exams and is considering which college offer to pursue. Not all young people are attending consistently but have improved from their starting points. Tutors are accommodated in the home when necessary and all young people have at least 25 hours of education per week. Staff encourage attendance daily and are aspirational for young people. This promotes a positive culture around education and achievement. Such achievements are celebrated through incentives and rewards.</p> <p>Young people understand how to complain. There are leaflets outlining how to complain freely available, but details in the young person's guide are brief. Young people would benefit from the process being outlined in the young person's guide.</p> <p>Young people attend a range of activities supported and encouraged by staff. Plans outline young people's likes and dislikes as well as introducing new activities to widen their experiences. Young people enjoy fishing locally and playing football. This adds to their sense of achievement and is recognised with photographs around the home and in files of their successes. Some young people have developed relationships and friendships in the area and are helped to maintain these regularly. The result is that young people develop socially.</p> <p>Young people's development into adulthood is supported by independent living plans, enabling the development of the skills and confidence needed to successfully manage their lives as adults. Such plans are worked through with</p>	

young people and staff and then put into practical use within the home. A social worker said, '(name) is being supported in the home'.

Young people are in good health. Such needs are identified and all young people are registered with local services to enable them to learn to manage their own physical well-being. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective. When appropriate, young people are able to self-medicate. Plans state that this is agreed with social workers but this agreement is not detailed in the relevant documents and needs addressing. The impact of not documenting the agreement poses a risk of plans not being followed.

The current young people are the first to be welcomed to the home. Their transitions were well planned overall, with one being welcomed in an emergency who then remained. Staff ensure that they greet young people warmly when they return from school, leisure activities or home visits. They show interest in the young people's lives and check out their feelings about returning to the home. This develops a sense of belonging and trust.

Staff are aware of the importance of contact with family and friends to young people and support this by arranging links and transportation when appropriate. When needed, staff supervise these arrangements. This enables young people to maintain relationships that are important to them while offering support and a measure of safety. This allows the relationships to develop positively and offer a level of resilience to young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are safe within the home. Risk assessments concentrate on individual behaviours that may cause harm to children, young people or others. This ensures that appropriate risk taking is encouraged and risks that can cause harm are managed.</p> <p>Overall, episodes of missing are high. This is mainly to the agreed protocols for keeping certain young people safe, which means that early reporting is essential. Staff are aware of the agreed processes to follow young people when they go missing to actively look for and encourage them to return safely. When young people leave the home in an emotional state, staff maintain regular contact with them and continue to encourage them to return. A young person said, 'They are noseys but for the right reasons.' This demonstrates to young people that those</p>	

adults care about them and their safety.

Staff ensure that they develop clear, consistent boundaries quickly to enable young people to settle. Use of restraint is low and recorded appropriately when this has been necessary. Sanctions are used and overall they are appropriate. Incentives form the greater part of managing behaviour and are tailored to each individual young person. This enables young people to develop a positive view of themselves and what they are able to achieve.

Overall, incidents are appropriately recorded and reported to the relevant authorities. One incident had not been reported to the regulator but had been notified to the local authority and plans and risk assessments amended as required. It is important that such incidents are reported to all relevant parties, including the regulator, to gain a full understanding about the actions taken to address the concerns.

Staff maintain regular contact with those professionals involved in the care of young people. Updated information is shared at regular intervals. A social worker said, 'The staff are very accommodating, and keep in good communication.' Positive relationships are beginning to develop with the police and other services that contribute to the care of young people. A police officer said she was, 'Happy with the protocols in the home and how they carry them out.'

Recruitment processes are robust. All staff are still in their induction period, although some are more experienced than others. The impact is that the team is still in development. The team all trained together in the first few weeks. This has helped begin the process of cementing the team relationships and ensures a consistent approach from staff in supporting young people's behavioural needs and promoting feelings of safety and security.

Staff are clear about policies and procedures to keep young people safe. They have included practices to keep young people safe from exploitation but they would benefit from more training in this area. Advanced levels of training help prevent staff from missing indicators of concern relating to this type of abuse. There have been no allegations against staff to date. However, staff are clear about the procedures to follow should this occur. Internet safety is well managed. Appropriate technical filters are in place on equipment, and usage is monitored regularly.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced in residential care. He is supported by a strong team of individuals who contribute to an overall management team.

The statement of purpose is aspirational and does not reflect actual practice or what the placement offers in a minimal number of areas. This needs to be addressed as it means that those who place children and parents or carers do not have all the necessary information about how the home meets children's needs.

The home is highly staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the young people living there. This reduces young people's anxieties about who is available to support them and thus aids their emotional and social development. The numbers of qualified staff, however, are low. There are plans to address this situation when staff have completed induction periods. The manager states in the workforce development plan how this shortfall will be addressed.

Induction training is robust. However, there were no plans available to address the continuous professional development of staff. In addition there were no completed plans of training undertaken that would allow for strategic oversight of the training needs of staff. This means that renewals and updates of training can be missed, thus reducing the effectiveness of practice.

Staff receive supervision that is focused on young people's experiences, as well as raising areas for development through reflection on incidents. Supervision is recorded. However, it is not always carried out with the expected frequency to improve effective working practices with such a new team. Team and management meetings are regular and recorded.

Recording, overall, is of a good standard, but it is not always clear in terms of actions taken in dealing with incidents. This leaves room for misinterpretation of information and undermines good care practice.

A register of young people admitted to and leaving the home is in place but does not include all required information and this needs to be addressed. Incomplete recording means records would not stand up to future scrutiny in the light of any concerns.

A locality risk assessment is in place but requires updating to include all relevant risks in the area. This document has not been shared with the relevant professionals. This prevents a joint understanding between professionals about the risks that young people are exposed to.

The manager's monitoring of the home's performance is adequate, giving a narrative account of the progress and achievements of young people. However, a large number of documents such as risk assessments and evaluations of plans are not signed by the manager. This limits the manager's ability to effectively

determine whether actions were appropriate and address the issues. In addition, any shortfalls in care practice delivered to young people are not addressed.

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 children looked after 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 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 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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