

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC031490
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Secure Unit
Registered Provider	East Sussex County Council
Registered Provider address	County Hall, St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE

Responsible Individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Nigel Hewitt
Inspector	Paul Scott

Inspection date	12 July 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
Outcomes in education and related learning activities	Good

SC031490

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Managers do not consistently implement the home's safeguarding policy.
- Safeguarding records are of a poor quality and do not provide a sufficient level of detail.
- Managers have not been consistently robust in their application of day-to-day monitoring and oversight activities. They have failed to recognise a number of recording shortfalls, including gaps in behaviour management records and records of complaints.
- Risk assessments relating to mobility and some aspects of self-harm, in particular to the use of anti-rip clothing, are insufficiently detailed.
- Managers do not always make sure that agency staff, when used, come with the right skills, experience and training to work with this highly complex and challenging group of young people.
- Managers are not diligent in their responses to managing concerns raised by staff, specifically concerns raised in supervision and written reflective accounts of the ability of some agency staff.
- The manager has not addressed the requirement from the previous inspection. Processes for notifying Ofsted of significant events are not implemented effectively. Furthermore, the manager has not provided Ofsted with a copy of the home's updated statement of purpose and six-monthly review of quality of care.

The children's home strengths

- Senior managers have recognised the need for change and improvement. They have been proactive in securing the services of a very experienced individual whose remit is to scrutinise all aspects of the home's performance and to implement change where necessary.
- Young people are well supported by a group of staff who demonstrate a strong commitment to helping them overcome the difficulties they face. Young people make good progress because of this.
- Relationships are exceedingly strong and are effectively used, to help young people manage their behaviour. Young people are generally respectful of staff and each other, resulting in a mostly settled and pleasant environment.
- Young people say that they feel safe and they are well cared for. This is because staff give young people's safety and well-being a high priority. They help young people to understand their risk-taking behaviours and to develop strategies for better managing these when they return to the community.
- Teaching and learning are good. The majority of young people make good progress, relative to their age, circumstances and ability.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure</p> <p>(2)(a)(i) that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ensuring that the environment is free from potential hazards, in particular those associated with self-harm; that there is clear guidance for the use of anti-rip clothing for staff to follow; and that mobility risk assessments are individualised and give due consideration to the activity being undertaken by the child.</p>	18/08/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must</p> <p>(2)(g)(ii) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on the feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to further improving the processes for gathering young people's views and demonstrating how these have been used to improve the quality of care.</p>	18/08/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must</p>	18/08/2016

<p>2(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>This is particular reference to managers ensuring that they maintain good oversight of day-to-day practice through the effective use of existing monitoring processes.</p>	
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must</p> <p>2(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that any member of agency staff used in the home has suitable experience and training to work with vulnerable children in a secure environment.</p>	18/08/2016
<p>The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it, and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy to of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p>	18/08/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that staff receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and that any issues or concerns raised by staff are fully addressed to further inform and improve practice. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	18/08/2016
<p>The registered person must set out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect and ensure that this procedure is consistently followed by managers and staff. (Regulation 34(1)(b))</p>	14/07/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made. This is with specific reference to ensuring that records of restraint and single separation are completed fully and include the duration of the intervention. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(iv))</p>	14/07/2016
<p>The registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints on behalf of children and ensure that a record is made</p>	18/08/2016

of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. This is with particular reference to ensuring that young people can freely access complaints forms without asking staff and that detailed records of how complaints made have been managed are fully maintained. (Regulation 39(1)(3))	
The registered person must notify Ofsted and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40(4) (c))	14/07/2016
The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(4)(a))	18/08/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voices on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, that all teachers plan demanding teaching, learning and assessment that enable all learners to make swift progress. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, that all teachers identify learners' errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar and help them to improve the standard of their written English. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, that teachers promote the importance of British values and highlight the dangers of extremism and radicalisation routinely and effectively. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, that leaders ensure that their quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment is rigorous and secures sustainable improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, that leaders provide governors with robust information on teaching, learning and assessment that enables them to provide effective challenge of leaders. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29,

paragraph 5.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. As well as the living accommodation, there are facilities for administration and education provided on the site. The children's home can accommodate up to seven young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years and subject to Section 25 of The Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/10/2016	CH - Full	Good
20/05/2015	CH – Full	Requires improvement
13/10/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
24/06/2014	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
<p>Systems are in place for young people to formally raise a complaint. However, the need for young people to rely on staff for materials, such as pen and paper, and the location of the complaints box, which is in a restricted area, mean that they may not be able to raise a complaint independently or in private. Two formal complaints have been made since the last inspection. Young people did not raise any concerns about how these had been managed and confirm that they feel that staff listen to and take their grumbles and complaints seriously. However, the records of these complaints are not sufficiently detailed to evidence what steps have been taken to manage these to a satisfactory conclusion. Other forums are available for young people to raises complaints independently. For example, an independent advocate visits the home once a week and spends time with young people. The advocate can take an active role in the complaints procedures, should a young person request this.</p> <p>A particular area of strength is the strong relationships that have developed between staff and young people. Throughout the inspection, care staff demonstrated a genuine warmth and care for the young people. They manage their behaviour well, know individuals' likes and dislikes and respond positively to their needs. They are successful in helping the young people to show empathy and tolerance towards each other. As a result, the atmosphere in the home is warm, supportive and friendly. Young people say that they feel safe and well cared for, and inspectors observed young people actively seeking time with individual staff whom they enjoy spending time with and who share similar interests.</p> <p>The care team works effectively with the education team to ensure that young people have good educational opportunities. Effective systems are in place to make sure that communication and information sharing between the teams are well maintained. Daily handover meetings after education enable young people to reflect on their progress and behaviour. In addition, weekly assembly meetings provide young people with the opportunity to review their educational achievements. Young people's success is celebrated through praise, reward and certificates of achievement.</p> <p>Care practice is based on the principles of assessment, planning, review and implementation. A multi-disciplinary team comprehensively assesses young people's needs at the point of admission, formulates plans and interventions and regularly meets to evaluate effectiveness and review progress. In addition, care staff meet weekly to discuss each young person's current and emerging needs, behaviour, risks and vulnerabilities. Strategies are agreed, targets set and care</p>	

plans are updated. This ensures that young people's holistic needs are at the forefront of care practice.

The health needs of young people are well catered for. Young people have access to a wide range of services and professionals including a qualified nurse and specialist mental-health practitioners. Some young people's engagement with these services is varied, often hampered by the associated stigma. Managers have recognised this and are constantly looking for ways to increase the levels of engagement, for example, locating these professionals closer to the unit provides opportunities for mental health practitioners to form purposeful relationships with young people. Furthermore, weekly consultations with a qualified doctor have recently been introduced, resulting in increased levels of engagement.

Most young people's moves from the home are successful. Staff promote the need for exit planning at the beginning of a young person's placement and keep it high on the agenda throughout their stay. Managers and staff advocate well on behalf of young people. For example, they will challenge placing authorities when they fail to meet their statutory duties to plan for resettlement, escalating concerns when necessary. This has, in most cases, been effective and means that young people have good arrangements in place for when they return to the community.

The management team has recognised that the home's recording systems do not effectively demonstrate how young people are consulted. In response, a senior worker has been tasked to develop new consultation systems. The young people have responded well to the 'you said - we did' approach. To date they have enjoyed a Hawaiian themed party and are currently planning an 'Alice in wonderland' tea party. Memorabilia is displayed and provides young people with a visual reminder of these themed activities. The picture displays capture positive memories for the young people. An improved structure and format to the young people's meetings has also been introduced. In the short time since the improvements were implemented, the young people have given their views about the quality of care they receive and have received feedback on actions taken since the last meeting. Young people's experiences and opportunities have improved as a result.

Young people benefit from being able to contact family members by having an approved list of contacts pre-programmed in the home's telephone system. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In addition, young people benefit from maintaining and developing their relationships with family members who visit the home. Weekly updates are provided to families and social workers to inform them of their child's progress or raise any particular difficulties or concerns. This ensures an inclusive approach to each young person's care.

	Judgement grade
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Young people say that they feel safe. They can identify staff whom they can talk to if they are worried or concerned about anything. Observations during the inspection noted respectful and warm relationships between young people and staff. Young people raised no issues with inspectors about their safety and confirmed that bullying is not an issue for them. This is because high levels of supervision and proactive staff responses address any incidents of bullying quickly. Group work and restorative practice sessions are well used to reinforce a zero tolerance to bullying and help young people understand the impact that bullying has.</p> <p>Young people's risks and vulnerabilities, including risk of child sexual exploitation, missing episodes, self-harm and suicide are assessed when young people are admitted to the home. Staff routinely share and implement young people's individual risk assessments and relevant plans to help keep them safe. When there have been incidents of self-harm, staff closely supervise and monitor young people to keep them safe. Risk assessments are updated promptly with new information. However, not all potential hazards to young people are routinely considered in these documents, for example the use of glass nail varnish containers. The use of anti-rip clothing lacks detailed guidance for its use.</p> <p>All staff have undertaken child protection training which is regularly refreshed. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in helping to keep young people safe and make every effort to do this. They know how to raise concerns, escalating these to managers. There are good safeguarding links and liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the designated officer in the local authority. Information provided by the manager about safeguarding and restraint practice in the home is considered in the LSCB's annual report.</p> <p>Procedures for the management of safeguarding concerns and allegations are generally good. The designated officer confirms that they have no concerns about safeguarding practice or young people's safety. However, records suggest that on one occasion managers failed to follow their own allegations management process, speaking to the person whom the allegation was about prior to consulting with the designated officer. Senior operational managers have recognised this shortfall and taken action to review and reinforce the organisation's safeguarding policy. Safeguarding records are of a poor quality. The majority lack sufficient detail and are badly organised. This makes it difficult to easily confirm the action taken by staff and, in many cases, the outcome. Further enquiries confirmed that young people's safety and well-being had not been compromised.</p> <p>There have been no incidents of absconding since the last inspection. There is a protocol in place that is agreed with the local authority and local police service. Staff provide good levels of monitoring that keep young people safe. They take a risk-aware approach to mobility, enabling young people to engage in activities in the community, in preparation for when they leave. This has been very successful</p>	

and has been managed effectively. However, mobility risk assessments are not sufficiently detailed. They do not consider the different levels of risk associated with different activities. For example, when the young people go swimming, there is little consideration of how supervision will be maintained when they are getting changed or are in the pool.

Staff present as good role models and promote positive behaviour. They work hard to engage young people and have exceptionally positive relationships with them. They appropriately address and challenge negative behaviour and have a good understanding of each young person's triggers and strategies that are effective in calming them down, for example spending time in the sensory room, using relaxation techniques and providing young people with the opportunity to talk to staff whom they trust. Positive behaviour is reinforced through the use of an incentive and reward scheme, which is rated on a three-point scale. Staff have recognised that this generic scheme has not had the desired impact for a number of young people. Increasingly, individualised systems are being introduced, such as 'star charts'. Although still in the early stages, this personal approach to target setting and identifying rewards is having a positive impact on the behaviour of a number of young people with complex needs.

Negative behaviour is appropriately challenged through the use of a combination of sanctions and restorative practice responses. When sanctions are used, they are proportionate and relevant. Staff use their positive relationships with young people to help them to consider their actions and make amends for their misdemeanours. This is achieved through proportionate reparation and mediation. As a result, young people develop an understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others and themselves.

Physical intervention is used in line with regulations. Restraint techniques involving pain compliance are not used. The core staff team is trained in the home's physical intervention technique and has this training regularly refreshed. The same rigour is not applied to agency staff, who often come without this training. Managers state that there is an expectation that agency staff do not involve themselves in physical restraint unless they are trained in the home's approved methods. However, records confirm that on one occasion an untrained agency worker was involved in the restraint of a young person, contrary to the home's policy. No young person was harmed on this occasion. However, a failure to follow procedure places young people at potential risk of harm and leaves the member of staff vulnerable to allegation.

All incidents of physical restraint are quality assured by a senior manager, using closed-circuit television (CCTV). Information is used to develop practice with a clear focus on reducing the number of restraints, which is relatively low already. When restraints occur, staff are keen to ensure that relationships are repaired and that young people's views are gathered and recorded. However, it is not always clear in records how this information has been used to update behaviour management plans, for example when young people identify a particular trigger. Monitoring of records is weak and had not picked up on this or identified gaps in

records such as the duration of the restraint. Staff are fully conversant with the use of single separation and use this appropriately. Detailed records showing the reason for and type of separation are maintained. They clearly evidence that staff monitor young people and make every effort to reintegrate them back into the group, which for the majority is after a relatively short period. Duty managers are informed at the beginning of any period of separation, enabling them to monitor its use. Further approval from senior managers is required if the period of separation exceeds three hours. In a small number of cases, it was unclear in the records when the separation had ended and the approval to extend acquired.

Managers, care staff and teachers have undertaken training in awareness of radicalisation. Managers demonstrate an understanding of their duties set out in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the government's 'Prevent' duty guidance. There are links with relevant agencies and professionals to share information, when appropriate.

Searching practice is underpinned by clear, fully understood policies and procedures that advocate a risk-led approach to searching. Staff carry out searches in a sensitive manner, with the dignity and well-being of young people being fully promoted. Personal searches are only conducted when potential risks are identified and when alternative methods cannot be used. Detailed records are maintained of all searches relating to communal areas, bedrooms and individual young people.

One member of staff has been recruited since the last inspection. Detailed recruitment records are maintained at the local authority head office. Managers maintain a record of the completed checks in the home to ensure they are confident that newly recruited staff are safe to work with vulnerable young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The manager, who is suitably experienced and qualified, has been registered with Ofsted since April 2014. He is currently absent from his post and was not present throughout this inspection. Good, well-thought out arrangements are in place to ensure that the home is effectively managed during his planned absence.</p> <p>Senior managers from the local authority had already recognised a need for improvement in a number of areas, mainly relating to systems, recording and management oversight. In the registered manager's absence, they have secured the temporary services of a very experienced manager from within the secure estate. This person has a clear remit to assess, review and start the process of implementing change where necessary. Although in the early stages, this</p>	

arrangement shows that senior managers recognise shortfalls and demonstrate a strong commitment to improving service delivery.

The statement of purpose provides good information about the aims and objectives of the home and the services and support on offer. Professionals are complimentary about the care and support provided and recognise the progress that young people make. This document was reviewed in May 2016, but the manager failed to provide Ofsted with this amended version. Further amendments are needed. The most up-to-date document does not provide any details about the current interim management arrangements.

The requirement made at the previous inspection is repeated. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted about an allegation against a member of staff. It is recognised that this has not compromised the safety of young people. Furthermore, there was a nine-day delay in informing Ofsted when the capacity to record on a number of CCTV cameras was lost. This resulted in an unacceptable delay in Ofsted being able to inform the Department for Education (DfE), which has responsibility for the licensing arrangements of the home. Positively, suitable action has been taken to address the four recommendations from the last inspection.

A range of monitoring systems are in place. Monthly visits are undertaken by an independent person who spends a good amount of their time with young people, and has a real focus on their views and opinions. This enables them to make an assessment about how effective the home is at safeguarding young people and promoting their well-being. The visitor confirms that managers and staff make every effort to address any identified shortfalls, in particular if there are issues affecting young people's direct care. The registered manager formally reviews the quality of care every six months. There is a good focus to this review, which evaluates overall practice against the quality standards. A detailed report is prepared and includes action planning, which is designed to improve the quality of care. The last review took place in May 2016, but the manager has failed to provide Ofsted with a copy of this report.

Some aspects of day-to-day monitoring are weak. The manager and his deputies have failed on occasions to use existing systems to identify and address shortfalls. While it is recognised that these have not resulted in young people's care and safety being compromised, there is clearly potential for this in some cases. For example, when there is a failure to recognise when allegations management procedures have not been followed, when mobility risk assessments are insufficiently detailed or when behaviour management records are incomplete.

Young people benefit from the care and support of an extremely dedicated core team of staff, who care enthusiastically for them. Young people acknowledge this and have established extremely warm and trusting attachments with some staff who, they believe, have their best interests at heart. Absence within the team is covered using a combination of staff working additional hours, bank staff and agency staff. Over recent months, there has been an increase in the use of agency

staff. At times managers have not been diligent in assessing the suitability of these staff to work with this highly complex and vulnerable group of young people. There is no clear guidance or agreement with the agency about minimum expectations, in terms of experience or training for example. Consequently, the quality of agency staff has been variable. For example, a number of staff come without relevant training, such as in the home's approved method of restraint, and on at least one occasion the agency staff's primary experience base was working with adults not children. It is evident from staff comments and the shift debrief book that, at times, core staff have felt an additional burden of responsibility when working with some agency staff, brought about by the need to compensate for their shortfalls. Positively, managers have a plan in place to reduce the over-reliance on agency staff through ongoing recruitment strategies.

Staff have good access to a range of mandatory and needs-led training opportunities that enable them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to meet young people's needs. New staff speak positively about the process of induction and confirm that they are well supported throughout their induction and probationary period. A small number of staff spoke to inspectors about some of the interactional difficulties that exist between some members of the care team. They confirm that there are mechanisms in place for them to raise issues anonymously, for example, at bi-monthly drop-ins that are facilitated by the clinical team, or the preferred method of individual supervision, which is regularly provided by the registered manager or one of the two deputy managers. Supervision records are detailed and reflect the nature of pertinent discussions. However, there is little evidence to confirm that managers consistently follow up concerns raised, and, while the majority are very low level, they have the potential to undermine the cohesiveness of the team if not addressed.

	Judgement grade
Outcomes in education and related learning activities	Good
<p>The large majority of young people make good progress in education. Information on young people's starting points is used effectively to ensure that young people are studying at the right level. Leaders and teachers use external indicators to measure progress and work closely with young people in daily 'personal targets' sessions to evaluate progress made. Teachers promote successfully the 'TAG' process in which young people are encouraged to reflect regularly on their work and 'tell', 'ask' and assess their 'goals'. As a result, the large majority aspire to improve their work, make demonstrable progress and achieve.</p>	

The majority of teachers provide an appropriate range of tasks and activities to interest young people and motivate them to apply themselves fully in the learning process. Most teachers plan sequential steps of learning throughout each topic, which enable young people to master and develop essential knowledge and apply this successfully to meet the criteria within units of accreditation. However, too many teachers plan a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and do not plan sufficiently to meet the individual needs of their class group. Consequently, a minority, particularly the more able, are not challenged to excel and make the swift progress of which they are capable. For example, in art and crafts lessons, teachers enable young people to create vibrant, practical work to a good standard but do not plan to develop their higher-level thinking skills sufficiently through enabling them to interpret and analyse subject matter. Not enough teachers use questioning techniques routinely both to check and extend young people's understanding beyond the demands of the unit accreditation criteria. At times, teachers move from topic to topic too quickly without consolidating young people's understanding and fluency of application. For example, young people making good progress in solving problems surrounding the properties of triangles and parallelograms in mathematics are not provided with enough opportunity to practise how to derive properties in more complex polygons, including kite, trapezium and rhombus, and accelerate their geometry skills.

Leaders do not promote the value of young people studying independently outside of lessons sufficiently. Not enough teachers set homework for young people. As a consequence, too many young people do not accelerate their skills as quickly as they are capable of doing.

The majority of young people produce lucid descriptive writing with appropriate structure and good subject content. Most teachers promote young people's reading skills effectively through ensuring that the majority read out from texts in lessons. As a result, most young people are accustomed to demonstrating their reading skills, reflecting on mistakes positively and, consequently, they improve in confidence and ability. However, too many teachers teaching across all subjects do not correct young people's errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, when appropriate, and too many basic errors persist in a minority of young people's work.

In mathematics and science, teachers enable the majority of young people to develop their reasoning skills adeptly and demonstrate clearly how they have grasped key concepts, principles and rules to problem solve routinely. However, a minority of young people are provided routinely with tasks that are too easy for them, and this inhibits their ability to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Not enough teachers plan or seize naturally occurring opportunities in lessons to promote equality and the importance of diversity in modern day Britain. Leaders have not ensured that teachers promote effectively the importance of British values or highlight the dangers of extremism and radicalisation sufficiently.

The majority of learning support staff provide effective support to young people who require additional help with their studies. However, at times, a minority of support staff intervene too quickly and do not facilitate young people to develop their independent working skills and make enough progress on their own.

The quality assurance of teachers' practice requires improvement. Leaders' observations of teachers' practice focus appropriately on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment of young people's progress. However, there is an absence of action planning to rectify identified areas for improvement or to share good practice. Appraisals and performance management meetings of teachers do not focus sufficiently on improving their practice because they do not routinely include arising findings from observations. Leaders do not record their 'walk-throughs' of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers receive lengthy notice of when they are to be observed in two short time periods each year. Twice-yearly quality assurance visits by external advisors do not focus sufficiently on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment taking place during the visits. Leaders do not monitor or evaluate the actions detailed in the annual development plan until the end of the academic year.

As a consequence of the weaknesses in the quality assurance of teachers' practice, leaders do not secure an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment from which to improve standards. Leaders' self-evaluation judges teachers' practice to be outstanding, but does not focus sufficiently on the characteristics of teaching, learning and assessment to demonstrate why. The head of education's reports to governors focus aptly on young people's progress, but do not include sufficient evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, governors are not able to provide effective challenge of leaders.

Leaders ensure that the range of learning provision meets the assessed needs of the large majority of young people. A broad spectrum of subjects is provided and appropriate time is dedicated to study on accredited English, mathematics and science courses. Levels of staffing are very high. The education centre is well designed and comprises purposeful classrooms and workshops with well-equipped resources. Young people have good access to computers and a secure internet link that is carefully monitored. Most rooms feature displays that celebrate young people's achievement well, but not enough promote the value of English and mathematics skills. Leaders have designed timetables and subject content to enable young people to work towards appropriate unit accreditation within the relatively short period (around 15 weeks on average), that they stay at the home. Most young people value immensely the opportunity to gain accreditation in their studies and appreciate the recent emphasis placed by teachers on improving their work-related knowledge and industry-specific skills. One young person has been supported to study three GCSE courses in English, mathematics and science.

Leaders and teachers promote young people's understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters well through daily assemblies and talks. Young people

know how to, and do, work safely. Leaders have not planned to provide young people with the opportunity to take up formal accredited learning in the four lessons of physical education that take place each week. Leaders' plans to introduce functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are yet to actualise.

Young people develop their understanding of personal, social, health and work-related issues through a broad range of enrichment opportunities that are pertinent to their needs. Leaders ensure that enrichment themes are underpinned by visits from external speakers, employers, artists and community organisations, and that these align purposely to topics studied in the formal education setting. Young people value these experiences and articulate their gains in learning enthusiastically. All young people have access to externally provided independent career information, advice and guidance. Education staff are appropriately involved in informing young people's care plans and contribute well to their transition planning. Leaders have made considerable progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection report including the need to secure detailed knowledge of the destinations of all leavers.

Young people's behaviour is good. Leaders and teachers have established a safe and secure learning environment for all young people at all times. Education and residential staff meet at the start and end of each day to ensure that appropriate actions are in place to mitigate any arising concerns relating to young people. Any errant behaviour in lessons is well managed to ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted. Staff incentivise good behaviour through the 'ribbon' scheme, which results in a variety of rewards for good course work, demonstration of self-control and effective anger management. Young people exhibit high levels of respect and tolerance to one another and towards staff. As a consequence, most lessons take place in a calm and purposeful manner. Movement of young people between lessons takes place in a quiet and orderly fashion. While leaders analyse comprehensive information on individual young people's progress and attendance well, they do not collect and use data on overall attendance by specific groups of young people or per subject. Consequently, they are not able to assess accurately the full impact of teaching, learning and assessment or design the curriculum fully to meet the needs of all young people.

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 that 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 whom 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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