

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/07/2016
Unique reference number	1214396
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	River Valley Care Ltd
Registered provider address	The Stables, Chestnut Farm, Cuxham, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5ND

Responsible individual	Quentin Carson
Registered manager	Jason Sellars
Inspector	Sue Young

Inspection date	27/07/2016
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	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	Good

1214396

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff are sensitive to young people's wishes and feelings while at the same time working with them to try to keep them safe.
- Staff spend time with young people in order to develop their trust and form good relationships with them.
- Staff support young people well and help them to progress in their education.
- Young people receive day-to-day experiences that are of a high quality and geared to their individual needs.
- Staff support young people well in the transition to their new placements.
- Managers and staff work well in partnership with placing social workers and other professionals to keep young people safe.
- The home is well resourced to support continuity and consistency of care for young people.
- There are some shortfalls in relation to the leadership and management of the home. These are regarding staff supervision and young people's records, and do not have a direct impact on young people's safety.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children’s needs are met</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, with particular reference to ensuring that children have a complete and current relevant plan, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(c) challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans</p>	<p>31/08/2016</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that placements for children are only accepted where the registered person can be satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Ensure that a record of supervision is kept for all staff, including the manager. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to two young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is run by a private company.

The home's statement of purpose indicates that the age range will be between 10 and 18 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

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 following the home's registration in January 2016. At the time of this inspection, there were no young people living in the home.</p> <p>Young people receive good individual care from managers and staff. Staff spend time with them developing their trust and forming relationships. As a result, young people start to develop in confidence and self-esteem. Staff are sensitive to young people's wishes and feelings while at the same time working with them to try to keep them safe. One young person commented, 'I was really happy. They do their job well and go above and beyond.' Young people are supported to share their views on an individual basis in regular discussions with their key workers and during young people's meetings. They are aware of how to make a complaint and feel that their views are taken seriously. The young people's guide is accurate and gives young people clear information about what to expect when living in the home.</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to be healthy and to make progress in their education. They are supported to lead healthy lifestyles and to attend routine and specialist health appointments. In addition, the home commissions specialist therapeutic packages for young people. Staff also support young people well to progress in their education. For example, one young person received one-to-one tutoring, which enabled her to sit her GCSE examinations. Those young people with a history of non-attendance at school have also been actively supported by staff to attend college open days and to look for apprenticeships. Staff work with young people nearing school-leaving age in structured activities, such as cooking, which support their independence.</p> <p>Young people receive day-to-day experiences that are of a high quality and geared to their individual needs. Staff encourage young people to enjoy a high level of activities outside the home. They engage well with young people to find activities and interests that motivate them. For example, young people have enjoyed swimming, horse riding, canoeing and various educational trips to museums and zoos. One young person described living in the home as 'ace'. Another young person was able to make his own CD track during a visit to a recording studio.</p> <p>Young people are actively encouraged to remain in contact with family and friends. Staff transport them to have contact with their family, often travelling considerable</p>	

distances.

Staff support young people well in the transition to their new placements. Even when placements have broken down suddenly, staff support and help young people to settle into their new homes. One placing social worker stated, 'I witnessed a good relationship between the manager and the young person... Staff supported the ending well.'

The home feels calm, warm and comfortable. Communal areas are furnished to a high standard and young people's bedrooms are a good size. The manager stated that young people are able to personalise their bedrooms and buy things of their own choice, such as duvets, when they first arrive.

	Judgement grade
<p>How well children and young people are helped and protected</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Staff and managers work hard to safeguard young people. Staff understand the risks to young people and provide consistent boundaries that help them feel safe and secure. Staff are knowledgeable and up to date with regard to safeguarding, including the risk of child sexual exploitation. One young person stated, 'I felt safe; they did everything to keep us safe.'</p> <p>Staff manage young people's challenging behaviour well. Physical interventions only occur when absolutely necessary and are of short duration. Managers and staff work closely with the police and local authority child sexual exploitation officers to help manage young people's behaviour. Staff are proactive. They escalate concerns appropriately and take the necessary steps to protect young people. They follow young people when they go missing from home, and try to minimise the risk when they do go missing, for example by keeping in telephone contact with them. When young people return home, staff speak with them to help them understand the dangers associated with going missing. This behaviour reduced significantly for one young person who had a substantial history of going missing from home.</p> <p>Placement plans and individual risk assessments are understood by staff. Managers carefully consider the appropriateness of a placement before a young person is admitted into the home. Evaluation risk assessments, however, do not clearly demonstrate this. As a result, staff may not have a full understanding of young people's healthcare, educational, behavioural and emotional needs when they first arrive at the home.</p>	

Staff conduct regular fire and environmental checks to ensure that the home environment is safe and secure. The home's location risk assessment is detailed and covers all areas of concern in the locality. Young people and staff are aware of how to keep themselves safe in the event of fire through regular fire evacuations.

There is a robust selection process for all new staff working in the home to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. Visitors to the home are checked and supervised appropriately so that young people are safeguarded.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The home was registered in January 2016. It is well led by an experienced registered manager. He is currently enrolled on the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. The home is well resourced and is managed in line with the home's statement of purpose. As a result, young people experience continuity and consistency of care.</p> <p>Managers and staff are clearly child focused. Although young people continued to display risk-taking behaviour, such as going missing, they made some progress in the short time they lived at the home. They engaged in therapy, sat GCSE examinations and attended activities in the local community. The manager is developing a system to monitor outcomes for young people and to evaluate the quality of care provided to them. It is early days, but he is developing an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home.</p> <p>Staff feel well supported to meet the needs of the young people they care for. The majority of staff receive regular supervision from the registered manager. One member of staff, however, has no records to demonstrate that supervision has taken place. The home has developed a training programme to meet the mandatory training requirements for staff. All care staff have obtained or are in the process of obtaining the appropriate qualification to work with children and young people. This helps to ensure that all those caring for young people are equipped to meet their needs.</p> <p>Managers have developed good professional relationships and work well in partnership with placing social workers and other professionals to ensure that young people are supported in all areas of their development. However, the registered manager does not always challenge local authorities to facilitate young people's plans. On the other hand, Managers and staff were particularly effective in</p>	

helping to secure an alternative placement for a young person and supported her well in her move to her new home. One placing social worker stated, 'I had good communication with the managers... I would definitely place someone there again.'

Case records for young people are generally of a good quality and are kept up to date. They are clear and contribute to staff's understanding of each young person's life. The manager, however, has not effectively challenged the local authority social workers to ensure that all young people's care plans are on young people's files and known to staff.

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 the '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 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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