

## Children's home's inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>15/08/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC429748</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>The Ryes College Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Aldham Business Centre, New Road, Aldham, Colchester CO6 3PN</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>James Fischer II</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Vivienne Toms</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Trish Palmer</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>15/08/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good</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>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<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>Good</b>

## SC429748

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Staff understand the importance of education and actively support children to attend.
- There is a stable, dedicated staff team that knows the individual needs of the children and is committed to working with them.
- Staff understand the importance of contact for children and families, and support and facilitate this happening.
- Staff are consistent with boundaries and appropriately challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Children are encouraged and supported to attend activities in the community to build and maintain friendships.
- Children are supported to learn to manage appropriate risks, in consultation with parents and social workers.
- Staff understand the importance of having good transitions, both into and out of the home, and the impact that these can have on children.
- The home is decorated to a good standard. However, the bathroom is in need of redecoration.
- There are comprehensive placement plans in place which support the staff in working with the children. However, children do not sign to say that they have read or are in agreement with these.
- The incidence of children going missing has reduced but, when this does happen, they do not receive a return to home interview by an independent person.
- Bullying is currently not a major issue at the home but, when it does occur, it is not recorded in the appropriate place, making it difficult to monitor.
- Staff do not receive supervisions and appraisals in line with the home's policy.
- The children's guide contains out of date information.

## 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
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(b)(c))	07/10/16

### Recommendations

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

- Provide a homely environment, in particular, a pleasant and well-designed communal bathroom. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Provide children with the opportunity to comment on and sign their placement plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.31)
- Ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand the day-to-day routines of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. This is with specific reference to challenging the local authority when young people are not provided with this opportunity. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Undertake scrutiny of the home and make best use of internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement, in particular the records of bullying. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is one of three children's homes run by a private organisation that also operates a school. Young people can attend the school located on the site of another children's home owned by the organisation. The home provides accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/16	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/08/2015	Full	Good
14/01/2015	Full	Good
07/08/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/03/2014	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>The children have built good relationships with an enthusiastic, dedicated staff team that knows and understands their individual needs, and supports them to progress. A parent commented: 'There is a drastic difference in him. They have given him a path to walk, comforted and supported him at a time when he needed it.'</p> <p>There is a wide variety of activities in both the home and the community. Staff support children to follow interests and hobbies such as football club, cadets and skateboarding. This gives children the opportunity to build social skills and to make and maintain friendships in the community. A social worker said: 'He can have more free time now and manages this well. Staff will continue to monitor this.' A parent commented: 'He has been allowed to be a child again, and climb trees and do normal day-to-day stuff.'</p> <p>Children have started to make good progress since moving into the home. One child has been supported in moving back home. Staff still stay in contact to support both him and his mother in the early stages. A social worker said: 'Staff work well with him and he has been able to grow safely.' A parent said: 'There is good role modelling by staff in a very nurturing environment.'</p> <p>Staff understand the importance of education and actively support and encourage children to attend. Children have excellent attendance, and there is good communication between school and the home, with regular reports and updates. One child is starting college in September, and another will be having work experience for one day a week.</p> <p>Staff have good knowledge of why the children are in care, and their current and future plans. A child spoken to could explain why he was currently living at the home.</p> <p>Staff understand the importance of transitions, both into and out of the home. Children are informed of potential new admissions through house meetings. Staff understand that transitions are different for each child and will adapt to support them. They also understand that leaving the home can be difficult for children, the staff plan for meaningful positive endings, and ensure that they leave with photos and memories of their time at the home.</p> <p>Staff understand the importance of contact between children and their families,</p>	

and support and facilitate this happening, in line with the social worker's care plan. A parent said: 'We can come to the home when we want. The staff are very welcoming.' One of the children said: 'I now have contact with my mum every week. Staff take me and pick me up. I have started to stay for some weekends.' This is further supported by social workers, one of whom commented: 'The staff are really good at working with mum around contact.'

Children have individualised placement plans, which support the staff in working with them effectively. A copy is given to the child when the plan has been updated. However, there is no evidence that children read or agree these or that social workers are in agreement with the home's plans, which could lead to professionals not working consistently with the children.

Children have weekly incentives, and these focus on individual targets, incorporating independence and daily life skills. Staff use positive consequences to acknowledge when children have tried or achieved something positive to build self-esteem and self-worth. Sanctions are fair and proportionate, and relate to the behaviour. Children are given the opportunity to comment and sign the sanction, and staff will follow this up in a key-work session to support the child in understanding the behaviour and looking at how they can change.

Children's health needs are promoted. They are registered with local doctors, dentists and opticians. The looked after children's nurse also completes a health assessment. Staff monitor children's height and weight at regular intervals and promote healthy eating. A social worker commented: 'He has very complex health needs. The staff have been instrumental in getting things sorted with the GP and there has been very good multi-agency working.'

There is a comprehensive children's guide, which explains how children can complain, and explains the rules and boundaries, and what children can expect when moving into the home. However, it does not have the day-to-day routine of the home and some contact details are not up to date for agencies that children can contact if they wish to complain.

The home is spacious and is decorated to a good standard. There are photos of children and staff, and collages of children celebrating birthdays and special occasions. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. However, there is only one bathroom in the home, which is need of updating and redecorating.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The children know how to complain. There has been one complaint since the last full inspection. This was resolved within the relevant time scale, and the child was able to sign and comment to say that he was happy with the outcome. A child spoken to said: 'If I wasn't happy with something, I would just talk to staff or bring it up in a house meeting.'</p> <p>Staff challenge unwanted behaviours and reinforce boundaries. A social worker commented: 'His behaviour has improved. Staff put in boundaries and stick to them' and a parent said, 'he has responded to having boundaries. They are consistent and he knows that staff are there for him.'</p> <p>There are clear behaviour management plans in place, which give staff good insight into potential triggers, behaviours and how to work with the child after an incident.</p> <p>During the inspection there were observations of good interactions between staff and children. Staff used appropriate humour and banter to engage with the children.</p> <p>There have been 18 physical interventions since the last full inspection. These have been low level and appropriate. Staff complete all the relevant paperwork, and children are given the opportunity to comment and sign after each intervention. All records of physical interventions are monitored and evaluated by the manager, to enable her to look at patterns and trends, and there has been a decrease in the number of restraints in recent months.</p> <p>A member of staff who was injured during an incident and subsequently had several weeks off work says that she was supported by the manager and, on her return, was able to re-establish her previous good relationship with the child involved. This shows that staff understand the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships while still discussing unwanted behaviours.</p> <p>Staff had a good relationship with the local police community support officer who regularly visited the home. He had been involved in speaking to children regarding behaviours and consequences in the home and community. The manager says that he was supportive and had built good relationships with staff and children. A new police community support officer has recently started, and has begun to visit the children.</p> <p>Comprehensive risk assessments are in place which outline the risks in both the home and community and the strategies to manage these safely. These are</p>	



reviewed regularly and amended when necessary. A social worker commented: 'Staff manage his risks well, but also teach him how he can manage his own risks as far as possible.' Staff understand the importance of young people managing certain risks, according to their age, understanding and ability.

There are impact risk assessments which look at the risks of a new child coming into the home as well as the risks to and presented by the other children, along with strategies for risk reduction in order to safeguard all the children.

Health and safety checks are completed and up to date. There is an area risk assessment in place which outlines risks in the area and actions for reduction. The manager has had input from the police and other local services. This makes staff aware of potential risks and how these can be reduced to keep children safe.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and have attended the appropriate training. 'Prevent' duty training has been booked for staff to attend in September 2016. Although the staff spoken to had some understanding, extra training will support staff to further safeguard children.

There has been a significant decrease in incidents of children going missing. Staff actively search for and try to contact children if they are not back on time. Staff speak to children on their return to try to ascertain where they have been and, check their well-being. They record how the child presented on their return. However, children do not receive a return to home interview by an independent person. There has not been a robust enough challenge to the local authority regarding providing an opportunity for an independent return home interview on every occasion of a child being missing from care.

A member of staff had spoken to a child about his behaviour and how it presented. A detailed conversation was recorded regarding bullying behaviour and the impact that it can have on others. However, it had not been recorded in the bullying log and there was no evidence that the victim had been spoken to. If incidents of bullying are not logged, it is difficult to monitor patterns and trends within the home.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The manager has been in post since April 2011 and has the relevant qualifications and experience to manage the home. She has a clear vision for the home, and a member of staff commented that she leads the team by example. The children are central to the home, and staff have a good insight into their needs and behaviours and support them in all aspects of their lives.</p>	

The manager has good understanding of the children's needs. A parent commented: 'The manager keeps me informed. We work together and she keeps me updated with everything.'

Weekly reports are sent to social workers, informing them of the child's week. A social worker confirmed: 'Staff always send me a copy of incident forms and keep me updated.'

Children have alarms on their bedrooms to alert staff if they get up during the night. Children are aware of why these are in place, and consent forms have been signed by parents and social workers.

Recruitment checks are verified before staff can start work at the home. An induction programme is in place, which is overseen by the training officer. A copy of the induction is not kept in the home, so it is difficult to evidence the quality of induction.

Staff cover gaps in the rota or staff from the sister home will cover. They understand the importance of children having staff around them who they know and trust, and the importance of them having consistency to keep them safe.

There are monitoring checks in place which support the manager in identifying trends and patterns at the home. She also uses the independent visitor's reports to support her monitoring of the quality of care in the home.

Staff meetings are regular and provide the opportunity to discuss the children and strategies for working with them. A member of staff commented that they have found staff meetings both informative and supportive, ensuring that all staff are consistent in their approach. However, some staff have not had regular supervision or appraisals to support their practice and development.

## 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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