

Children's home's inspection – Full

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| Inspection date | 10/08/2016 |
| Unique reference number | SC462729 |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |
| Registered provider | Surecare Residential Limited |
| Registered provider address | Mey House, Bridport Road, Poundbury, Dorset DT1 3QY |

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| Responsible individual | Emma Barr |
| Registered manager | Dawn Francis |
| Inspector | Rosie Davie |

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| Inspection date | 10/08/2016 |
| Previous inspection judgement | Sustained effectiveness |
| 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 | Good |

SC462729

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Each child makes progress unique to their circumstances.
- Children learn strategies to manage anger and deal more effectively with challenging emotions.
- Overall, children make progress in their ability to reflect on their behaviour.
- All children clearly say that they feel safe and that this is a good home.
- Children who have left the home to live independently remain appropriately in contact with the home.
- Staff support and encourage family contact.
- Some children progress to higher education.
- Children do not go missing from this home.
- Physical intervention is rare.
- One child has passed his driving test and has a car.
- The home is well managed.
- The staff team receives good support, and accesses regular supervision and training.
- Three regulatory shortfalls identified during this inspection relate to meeting the education standard fully, and staff qualifications and annual appraisals. Three failures to meet quality standards relate to staff intervening more purposefully should children show bullying behaviours, staff responding when children refuse to take part in fire drills, and managers ensuring that all children understand their rights as a child looked after.

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 |
|--|------------|
| <p>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, with specific reference to children receiving home tutoring, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(2)(a)(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>(v) consistently promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.</p> | 30/09/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure each individual who works in the home in a care role has by the relevant date attained—</p> <p>(a) the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'); or</p> <p>(b) a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b))</p> | 30/09/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))</p> | 30/09/2015 |

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children understand their rights as a looked-after child, or child living in a children's home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.19)
- Ensure that all staff understand what they must do to prevent bullying of children by other children. Staff should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse, such as bullying in day-to-day relationships at the home. The registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and that staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively (see regulation 34(3) on the policy for the prevention of bullying). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.16)
- Take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child's needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. Staff should discuss the decision with the child's placing authority. If a child makes a choice that would place them or another person at significant risk of harm, staff should assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe. This is with specific reference to managing each child's refusal to take part in routine fire drills. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.7)

Full report

Information about this children's home

One of a small group, this home offers care and support for up to four children of either gender with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 26/01/2016 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 21/07/2015 | Full | Good |
| 03/02/2015 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 12/11/2014 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

| | Judgement grade |
|--|-----------------|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are | Good |
| <p>For a number of months following the last full inspection, the majority of the same children continued to live together. This familiarity has enabled those individuals to share experiences over a sustained period of time. They have gone on to develop fond and understanding relationships with one another.</p> <p>One young person who has very recently moved out returned to the home for a visit during this inspection. He said: 'I know that the staff here do everything that they can and I could not ask any more of them. They have helped me a lot. This is a good home and a lot of the staff here are like family to me.'</p> <p>Each child makes progress in their own way. Some access the services of the provider's therapist who meets with them individually to offer guidance and support. This helps those children to manage difficulties by helping them to alter the way that they think and results in an improved ability to make safer behavioural choices.</p> <p>For those children who do not wish, or are not ready, to engage with direct therapeutic support, the therapist also works directly with individual staff and the staff team. Together, they identify therapeutic targets towards helping the individual to change their behaviour. One placing social worker said: 'My child has made quite a lot of progress. The staff are good at applying boundaries while at the same time they are understanding of his challenging behaviours.'</p> <p>Some make progress in education. For example, of those enrolled in school, attendance in education improves alongside their willingness to undertake qualifications and participate in vocational training. One child said: 'Education is the main thing that the staff want us to do.' Others exceed expectations by enrolling in further education. One child said: 'I have a plan to go on from here to university. Living in this home, with the support and help from the staff, is helping me to make that happen.'</p> <p>However, progress and achievement in education is not consistent for all children. For example, some children living away from their placing authority are not enrolled in school. The registered and senior managers do seek to engage the relevant agencies to address and resolve this issue. However, for those children who have difficulty, for example in engaging with home tutors, the systems at the home are not sufficiently consistent or robust to encourage measurable progress and to promote informal learning. The result for those children is that, over a</p> | |

prolonged period, they are disengaged from learning, and this significantly reduces their likelihood of future employability.

Families and those who are significant to the children are welcome and are encouraged to visit the home. Staff help the children to have contact with their families by talking to them about how they feel, providing transport and inviting those who are important to them to the home, for example to celebrate birthdays. This helps children to maintain their identity and to feel valued while sustaining lifetime relationships.

Encouragement and role modelling from some of the older children helps the others to behave responsibly and, for example, to engage safely with the local community. As a result, they all benefit from the location of the home and the ability to access a range of communal leisure activities such as a gym, shopping, a pool and local attractions.

The home provides ample accommodation for each child. Each individual has the option to personalise their bedroom. Through day-to-day discussions, staff invite children to contribute their views to any planned changes for the home. This helps them to feel listened to.

Children learn to develop skills in independence such as cooking, laundry and self-care. This helps them to practise becoming appropriately self-reliant. One child has a part-time job, has recently passed his driving test and has a car. This inspires the other children to see that they, too, could develop the confidence to prepare proficiently for adulthood.

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| | Judgement grade |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
| <p>Children say that they feel safe and that they know how to make a complaint, although there have not been any formal complaints since the last inspection. They say that the staff listen to them and provide many opportunities for sorting out any issues as they arise. One child said: 'The staff are always talking to us about lots of different things and if there is anything that can't be sorted out, they go to the manager who is always ready and willing to speak to us. The best thing about this home is that any one of us can go to any one of the staff about anything.'</p> <p>Children do not go missing. However, the manager has ensured that there are active working relationships with the local police in the event of the home needing to manage this issue safely. When children are out of the home and alone in the community, this is by agreement between the staff, the child and the social worker. This means that the children are routinely in communication with staff, and following arrangements that reflect those of a family home.</p> | |

Staff are mindful of the potential for conflict in the group, and well-written risk assessments help to direct them towards many of the issues to be aware of between children. As a result, incidents of children making threats to other children and staff have begun to reduce. However, there has been a recent increase in incidents, which does coincide with changes in the group and the impact of alterations to some children's individual care plans.

While children do not name bullying as an issue that they are concerned about, some recent incident records and the inspection process evidences that there can be an intense dynamic in the home. On one occasion a number of months ago, after consideration and discussion, the police were called to the home. The result was that one child was charged and subsequently attended court for threatening another child. The threatened child said: 'The staff could not have done more to deal with the issues. I feel very supported.' However, some recent records show that the response by some staff to some subsequent incidents at the home fall short. This is because their interventions at the time and subsequently do not go far enough to increase individual children's sense of personal responsibility. This does not challenge those children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on other children living in the home.

Restraint is rarely used. Frequently to good effect, staff use a structured reward system which offers incentives to children to modify some of their behaviour and motivates them frequently to stop, listen and do the right thing. As a result, the majority of children make positive contributions in and around the home. They feel valued by the staff and want to continue to behave well to show the staff and other stakeholders their potential. One child said: 'I like that the staff are fair. They set boundaries and put in consequences, but they are also lenient and that is good.'

Staff routinely undertake health and safety checks in and around the home to ensure that the range of systems and appliances remain safe and in good working order. Some children have smoked in the building, and staff have creatively addressed that specific issue with the individual children at the time. However, lately, many of the children have been refusing to take any part in the routine fire drills undertaken by staff. Records do not demonstrate how staff address this apathy with each individual child, which means that this shortfall has the potential to place the group of children at risk.

There have been no allegations against staff or matters referred to the designated officers. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and say that there is regular communication at the home about safeguarding matters.

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| | Judgement grade |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good |
| <p>Currently completing the required level 5 qualification and registered since the January 2016, the manager continues to develop the home and the staff team. Mindful of the potential impact for the children of some changes in staff, she works diligently to minimise this and strives for consistency in approach. One child said: 'The manager here is great. She does a fantastic job and knows what she is doing for us.'</p> <p>Conscious of the importance of effective partnership working, the managers and leaders in the home strive to engage with external agencies towards ensuring that children receive a rounded service. For example, the looked after nurse and the missing persons police liaison officer visit the home. Additionally, the managers and leaders seek to build professional working relationships with placing local authorities to ensure that decisions remain child centred. One social worker said, 'They work with me well and give me all the information that is necessary.'</p> <p>The registered and senior managers appropriately challenge care planning decisions. Additionally, they engage advocacy services to ensure that children have a voice, thus helping to secure stability and positive outcomes for the children. However, records show that, for some children, a more rigorous response is required to help them to understand the role of the Children's Commissioner and therefore their rights and entitlements.</p> <p>Staff receive regular supervision and support. New staff attend a range of training courses, including cognitive behavioural therapy and whistleblowing. This helps them to understand the home's statement of purpose and be prepared to fulfil their role. Nonetheless, managers have not yet completed annual appraisals for some staff. While the registered manager is aware of this gap and has a plan to rectify this issue, this is a shortfall. However, it has minimal impact for the children, because all of the staff say that the provider makes good provision for their respective development.</p> <p>The majority of staff who should have done so have achieved the required level 3 qualification. However, one member of the team holds a social work qualification. The result is a shortfall in this regulation.</p> <p>The recommendations from the interim inspection have been met. For example, the registered manager has ensured that staff are more familiar with the role of the virtual headteacher in promoting the education of children looked after.</p> <p>The registered manager routinely monitors activity in the home. She is keen to</p> | |

seek feedback from the children, their parents and agencies who use the service. The information gathered helps to inform the registered manager's plans to make changes and to develop the home. This means that, overall, she is aware of the home's strengths and areas for progression. She says: 'I know that there is more to do in this home and that there are things where I can see we can improve on.'

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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