

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC055912
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Verve Life Limited
Registered provider address	198 High Street, Burbage, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 3AB

Responsible individual	David Powell
Registered manager	Clare Alele
Inspector	Julia Wright

Inspection date	15/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
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

SC055912

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make good progress at the home as a result of the care and support that they receive from staff.
- Staff work in partnership with placing authorities and other agencies to promote the progress and well-being of young people in their care.
- Young people have positive relationships with staff. They feel supported, encouraged and valued.
- Staff support young people to develop independence skills and decision making, in line with their age and stage of development.
- Young people are involved in all aspects of the home's running. The participation of young people is a strong ethos within the home.
- Young people say that they are listened to and feel valued by staff.
- Staff work well together, and receive good support and guidance from managers.
- A strong management team has ensured that the service offered by the home has improved significantly since the last inspection.

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 an individual who works in a care home in a care role has the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. This is if the individual has attained— (4)(a) the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'). (5) The relevant date is— (a) in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(5)(a))	30/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home provides a clean environment for young people, in particular to maintain the high standards of cleanliness and decoration throughout the home, including the living room. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with learning disabilities, two of whom may also have physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/12/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
18/02/2015	Full	Inadequate
07/01/2015	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>Young people make very good progress in all aspects of their development as a result of living at the home. They benefit from well-planned individualised care that promotes their individual needs, and recognises their achievements and progress. The service offered to young people adapts to their changing needs and priorities. A small, stable staff team provides consistent and good-quality care to each young person. One young person said, 'I really like it here. We do lots of nice things, like going camping. I have learned a lot about healthy lifestyles and looking after myself. I can talk to staff and they help me.' Staff treat each young person with dignity and respect, and young people feel cared for and valued by them.</p> <p>Young people attend school full time, and their attendance and punctuality are excellent. Young people progress with their education as staff maintain regular communication with school staff, supporting their educational attainment.</p> <p>Young people are supported in looking after all aspects of their healthcare. They attend all routine appointments with local services and, where more specialised services are required, these are sought. For example, one young person struggled to express his emotions, resulting in incidents of escalating behaviour. Managers and staff ensured that he received therapeutic support that gave him the opportunity to talk to professionals, and this helped him to understand and manage his emotions. When a young person has longer-term health needs, they are helped by staff to learn the necessary skills to look after themselves. For example, staff are supporting one young person with a healthy eating and exercise programme. Staff complete activities and exercise with the young person to bolster enthusiasm and maintain progress. The young person's health has benefited considerably as a result of the programme, and his self-confidence and self-esteem have improved markedly.</p> <p>A key strength of this service is the independence work undertaken with young people. The independence project identifies targets and progress made by young people. They are fully involved with each step of the work – finding areas that they would like to develop, commenting on how they think that they have progressed and identifying any additional help that they need. Young people talked in an animated manner about their progress, which included not only day-to-day household tasks, but also working towards managing their medication, budgeting, menu planning and shopping. Staff communicate effectively with each other and with young people, ensuring that they receive the right level of support, and balance this with giving young people increased responsibility. Young people</p>	

participate fully in their care at the home, and they take pride in their progress and recognise their achievements. They know that adults listen to them and are interested in their views and opinions.

Young people have a very good quality of day-to-day life, and they enjoy a wide range of activities which they choose, in line with their interests. These include youth club, sport, cinema and a range of community activities. One young person took part in a charity fundraiser for a local hospice, raising money for the patients. He learned about the needs of others, increasing his sense of citizenship and community responsibility.

Young people's communication needs are carefully assessed and understood by staff. Information is presented in written and visual form, and some in widget. As they are given clear guidance from staff, young people learn in ways that make information accessible and understandable for them.

Young people maintain contact with family. Staff accompany them on visits and provide support afterwards, where necessary. Young people stay in contact with those important to them, and develop an understanding of their background and their lives to date. A social worker remarked, 'Staff have been brilliant with supporting his contact with his extended family, and they always ensure that this goes ahead.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people are safe, living at the home. Staff work in partnership with young people, their families, social workers and other professionals to assess and evaluate risks. Young people have very good relationships with staff, and these trusting relationships underpin young people's confidence and sense of security. Incidents have decreased as young people learn to self-regulate their behaviour. Physical interventions rarely occur, as staff understand when a young person's behaviour escalates, so they can step in and redirect them, resulting in a calm and inclusive environment for all. Incentives help young people to focus on positive behaviour. One young person said, 'I am hoping to buy a train set soon. I am very excited!'</p> <p>Since the last inspection, there have not been any incidents of young people going missing from care or being absent without permission. Staff are knowledgeable about what actions to take if these incidents occur. Young people's support and supervision needs are well understood by staff and this ensures that their day-to-day safety is maintained within the home and in the community.</p>	

Young people's safety is reinforced as individual and general risk assessments are regularly reviewed by staff and managers, ensuring that information is relevant and up to date. Staff work very well together to promote positive behaviour, and these clear and consistent boundaries create a sense of security and well-being for young people. A young person said, 'I am safe here because I am looked after well. I can talk to the staff. I am very happy here.'

Young people's behaviour is further promoted through the appropriate vetting of staff. There are effective and safe recruitment practices in place, meaning that young people are protected from adults who may wish to harm them.

Young people benefit from living in a home that has a safe and secure environment. Regular safety checks are undertaken by staff, ensuring that equipment works well and poses no risk to young people. Young people participate in these checks, helping them to understand the importance of safety and security in relation to their own welfare. Young people also participate in regular fire drills, maintaining safety for all.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The registered manager has been in post since April 2015, and registered with Ofsted in October 2015. She is an experienced manager who has a level 4 diploma in the management of residential services for children and young people, and a graduate diploma in the care of children and young people.</p> <p>The registered manager provides strong and effective leadership in the home. She remains focused on the development of the service for the benefit of young people, ensuring that they continue to make progress in line with their age and abilities.</p> <p>The registered manager is well supported by a senior team and staff group. The registered manager delegates some responsibility to staff while also regularly quality assuring tasks including recording, reviewing policies and practice, meaning that good standards of care are maintained. She works closely with the independent visitor and welcomes scrutiny and challenge, ensuring that young people benefit from a developing service.</p> <p>The registered manager is innovative and captures young people's enthusiasm. For example, one young person was disappointed to learn that children in care were not eligible for concessionary rates for local authority leisure activities. She supported the young person in challenging this decision, which was subsequently overturned, benefiting not only the young people at this home but others across the area. In addition, this young person recognised his significant achievement,</p>	

increasing his self-esteem and self-confidence.

Staff feel well supported. There is a comprehensive programme of induction for new staff, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary understanding of young people's needs when they begin work at the home. Regular supervision is undertaken with all staff, enabling them to reflect upon the needs of young people in their care and their own professional development. Annual appraisals are undertaken when staff have completed 12 months' employment, identifying their progress and the areas for development and training. The organisation offers a comprehensive internal training package for staff, which includes additional training that reflects the needs of young people living at the home, for example autism training and visual communication. This means that young people are cared for by informed staff. However, not all staff have completed their diploma level 3 in residential childcare people within the necessary timescales, meaning that some may have gaps in their knowledge of young people's comprehensive needs.

The registered manager has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the home. Areas for development include welcoming new staff and young people to the home, ensuring that practice meets the needs of the new young people, further development of young people's independence programmes, and embedding good practice with staff so that all staff know what they are doing and why. These plans ensure that the service continues to develop and benefit all young people at the home.

The registered manager has strong professional relationships with other agencies, including social workers, schools, health and others. This ensures that young people receive the best possible support to maximise progress in all areas of their development. A social worker commented, 'I have very good working relationships with staff, especially the manager and deputy manager. The communication is excellent.'

Young people continue to be cared for in line with the service described in the home's statement of purpose. A social worker commented, 'My young person has made great progress – with his health, emotionally, his independence skills, all round. He has grown in confidence and is much more confident in expressing his opinions. I feel so positive about the home. I would recommend it without hesitation.'

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection. One was in relation to improvements needed in the kitchen area. These were completed and the kitchen units have been refreshed, providing young people with a clean and pleasant space. Following some minor damage to another area of the home, additional work is needed to improve the living environment for young people. A second recommendation made at the last inspection has been met, as the registered manager closely monitors and quality assures all aspects of the running of the home to ensure that good standards are maintained.

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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