

## **Children's homes inspection – Full**

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>15/09/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC032058</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>David Knowles</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>James Harmon</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>15/09/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Sustained effectiveness</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>Requires improvement</b>

**SC032058**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Good quality care is being provided to the young people in a safe environment.
- The young people have developed trusting relationships with the staff, and they feel respected and listened too.
- The care planning for the young people is detailed and individualised with achievable goals.
- The young people are encouraged by the staff to lead healthy lives by attending health appointments and eating healthy meals.
- Education is highly valued by the young people: they attend regularly and advance to college.
- Engagement in meaningful activities allows the young people to develop self-confidence.
- The young people live in a safe environment and the staff understand how to keep them safe.
- There is a robust response to young people who go missing and are at risk of child sexual exploitation.
- Excellent professional links have been established with professionals from the local authority, police and other services.
- There are very few physical interventions.
- There is a new registered manager in post.
- There is excellent external monitoring
  - There are shortfalls in the internal monitoring and development of the service by management, resulting in two requirements.
- Two recommendations are made to improve the service, relating to staff practice that did not have an adverse effect on the young people.

## 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 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
13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to having a development plan in place for the home, the registered person should: (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	09/12/2016
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. (Regulation 45 (1))	09/12/2016

### Recommendations

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

- Case records must be kept up to date, signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by Buckinghamshire County Council and provides residential care for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/08/2015	Full	Good
09/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2014	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The young people reside in an environment where they are safe and have respectful relationships with the staff. The majority of the young people were not available during the inspection because of their daily routine, which kept them out of the home for an extended amount of time. Those spoken to and observed appeared settled in the presence of the staff and exhibited no concerns for their safety and well-being.</p> <p>Care planning for the young people is sound. The young people participate in weekly meetings, ensuring that their views are heard. The young people have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They know how the staff will support them daily. The signing and dating of documentation for young people has been inconsistent by the staff, and the manager acknowledges that this is an area in need of improvement.</p> <p>The young people are encouraged and supported by the staff to ensure that their health needs are met, including scheduling and attending appointments. Even when young people refuse to attend certain health appointments, the staff discuss their importance and purpose with the young person, while continuously encouraging attendance.</p> <p>The young people enjoy healthy, planned meals. The young people's meals are prepared during the week by a professional cook. All meals are planned and often prepared with the assistance of the young people. Having a cook in the home frees up the staff to engage more with the young people.</p> <p>The young people value education, as is evident by their getting up in a timely manner, eager to attend school. Some young people go on to attend college. Those young people not in full-time education receive alternative forms of learning. The staff are proactive in securing alternative services. The staff challenge any decision regarding the education of a young person effectively if it is not in the young person's best interests.</p> <p>The young people engage in meaningful activities individually and as a group. This summer, the young people were able to enjoy an extended holiday away from the home. Additionally, several daytime outings were planned and participated in with the staff.</p> <p>The home is well maintained and located in a quiet residential area. All young people have their own personalised bedrooms with ample space. The</p>	

home is currently undergoing some much-needed renovation and decorations. A new kitchen is being installed in a few weeks. New paint has been applied throughout the interior, and there are plans for new flooring.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The young people live in a safe environment. The necessary actions are undertaken by the staff to monitor and ensure the well-being of the young people. The staff carefully review all safeguarding concerns pertaining to the young people, and when necessary the designated officer is consulted by management.</p> <p>Missing from care is a chronic problem for some young people residing in the home, based upon their history of absconding prior to being placed. There is a detailed response by the staff when young people do go missing while being at risk of child sexual exploitation. The young people are monitored through staff liaison with professionals and attendance at regular meetings for young people who are considered hard to reach. The local child sexual exploitation officer said, 'The staff communicate well and despite resistance from the young person, do their best to safeguard her, nothing more they could do.'</p> <p>Risk assessments for the young people are clear and correctly identify all risks associated with the young people. When possible, staff consult with social workers and reassess information, providing opportunities for the young people to undertake tasks that were considered high risk. For example, a young person was able to have safe, unsupervised overnight contact with a family member without concern.</p> <p>Records indicate that very few physical interventions have occurred since the last full inspection. Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep all young people safe. Effective relationships between staff and the young people assist the young people to understand their triggers for inappropriate behaviours, preventing escalation.</p> <p>Several new members of the staff have been safely employed by safer recruitment practices. Prior to being appointed, the successful candidates have their background information scrutinised and verified. The young people benefit from management employing individuals with good characters and intentions.</p> <p>It was evidenced that the staff have a very good relationship with the police and only use their services as a last resort. A police community support officer (PCSO)</p>	

occasionally stops by the home and meets the young people, while sharing information with the staff. A PCSO was observed meeting with the staff on the first day of the inspection.

The physical environment is safe for the young people. All health and safety checks are undertaken and any problems are rectified immediately. The location risk assessment is current and reflects any concerns in the local community for the young people.

A review of staff training records reflected that some new members of the staff had yet to undertake an appropriate safeguarding course, despite working in the home for some time. The online safeguarding course that was completed was not sufficient to provide them with the necessary knowledge when considering the concerns for a high-risk young person. This did not negatively affect the young person and the training is being made a priority by the manager.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The management arrangements for the home have been finalised, with the interim manager being registered and confirmed in his post. He has been with the provider for many years and is considered a good leader by the staff. The manager will be starting his level 5 qualification in the next few weeks, ensuring that he has the correct qualification to manage a children's home.</p> <p>The service has consistent external monitoring, as reflected by the detailed monthly reports completed by the independent visitor. The reports are informative, offering insight into the daily lives of the young people and areas of improvement.</p> <p>Management is able to plan effectively for the young people. Care plans are purposeful and achievable. Regular review meetings are undertaken with the placing authority and achievable goals are set for the young people, with their views included.</p> <p>The ethos of the service is clearly outlined in the statement of purpose. It has recently been updated to reflect the registration of the manager and current staff. The children's guide is accessible to all young people and presents the information in an age-appropriate manner.</p> <p>Records show that the management has established good quality professional links. There are a broad range of professionals that the staff have established good</p>	



relationships with, including the police, placing social workers, health professionals and specialised services.

There is a diverse staff team in place. The staff team has a good ratio of males to females, and a mix of new and experienced individuals. An ongoing recruitment drive has seen the number of permanent staff increase and a reduction in the use of bank staff.

The staff are committed and consistent in their approach towards the young people. New members of staff are supported and mentored by the more experienced members of staff. The new members of the staff team spoke highly of the level of support provided by the manager and experienced members of the team. One newly appointed staff member said, 'We are a good team that communicates well, with excellent support. It has made working with the young people easier.'

All new members of the staff receive regular supervision and have their performance reviewed at 10 and 20 weeks before passing their probationary period. The majority of the members of staff are suitably qualified and others will start the qualification soon.

There has been no internal monitoring of the service. The management has not analysed the information available from the monthly visits further, and developed its own plan of action. The manager admits that the annual reporting and development plan for the home were not completed because of numerous changes in the management.

## 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016