

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>06/09/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1155768</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Worcestershire County Council</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>County Hall, Spetchley Hall, Worcester WR5 2NP</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Jake Shaw</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Barbara Layton</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Dawn Bennett</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>06/09/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</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</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

**1155768**

## **Summary of findings**

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

- Young people make excellent progress and experience improving outcomes in many areas of their lives.
- Young people benefit from excellent relationships between each other and with the staff who look after them.
- Young people who have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties experience effective and positively impactful care by a staff team which promotes an enabling culture.
- Staff provide outstanding child-centred practice that helps to ensure that young people flourish.
- Practice and routines are adapted and adjusted quickly to respond to individual young people's changing needs and risks.
- Staff safeguarding practice is outstanding. This is further strengthened by excellent partnership working key agencies.
- Young people feel respected, safe and secure at the home and with the people who look after them.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are central to how the home operates; these shape the way that staff organise themselves on a day-to-day basis.
- Professionals and families are extremely positive about the quality of care and support that young people receive, and the outcomes being achieved.
- The registered manager provides strong and effective leadership to ensure that young people's needs are fully met.
- The registered manager and the staff team are highly experienced and knowledgeable; they make good use of research to strengthen their practice.
- The staff team has a strong focus on the necessary goals and outcomes for young people to be successful.
- The registered manager uses insightful evaluation from monitoring visits to drive forward improvement in pursuit of excellence for young people.
- There is one minor shortfall. A recent change to a new electronic recording system has resulted in some information no longer being captured.

## 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>The registered person must ensure that, within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes all the points listed in Regulation 35(3)(a)(b)(c).</p> <p>This specifically relates to the home's electronic records.</p>	31/10/2016

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is a local authority-operated home. It provides care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2015	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>Young people have a strong sense of attachment to the home and they establish excellent quality relationships with staff. Young people receive outstanding individual support, guidance and advice that are consistent with their plans of care and identified needs. These high standards of care and attention to detail help young people to make excellent progress.</p> <p>Staff provide very effective emotional support that helps to create the right opportunity for young people to thrive physically, emotionally and socially. Staff practice is positive and proactive when tackling the difficulties that young people experience or encounter. While some young people can still demonstrate some very challenging behaviour, they are very positive about how staff work with them to help to overcome their difficulties.</p> <p>Staff listen carefully to young people and have a thorough understanding of their views, wishes and expectations. For example, staff listen to young people and actively encourage them to discuss their care plans, participate in their care reviews and to make decisions on matters that affect their everyday life. This meaningful participation means young people have a strong sense of identity and increased confidence to influence their life.</p> <p>When young people participate in key processes such as being a member of the children in care council group, other people involved have nothing but praise for them. For example, one member of the council said: 'We have known this amazing young man for many years. He speaks positively about the staff team. They understand his needs and support him in a nurturing way, allowing him to develop his confidence and independent skills. He now makes his own way to meetings using public transport. I would personally say, through my observations, that staff have given this young man a home where he appears to feel safe, secure and valued.'</p> <p>A particular strength of this service is the relationships between staff and young people. The staff team's in-depth knowledge of young people and their care needs means that staff focus exactly on each young person's needs. Young people receive supportive messages about how to develop new skills and strategies to problem solve and progress. A clinical psychologist facilitates regular meetings with staff. These help to strengthen the staff team's understanding and insight into the individual needs of young people. The clinical psychologist told the inspector 'I have been impressed by the staff's commitment and dedication.</p>	

The dynamics group can be a challenging and uncomfortable experience at times and, despite this, the staff have engaged well.' This work contributes to the staff team's ability to parent together cohesively.

Young people's diverse needs are not only positively explored and sensitively promoted, but are considered by the staff to be of paramount importance if young people are to succeed in the home. Young people have complex family backgrounds and varied experiences of being looked after. Staff access an extensive range of information to help them to learn about each young person. This enables staff to explicitly address individual needs by not only respecting their heritage and needs, but also by treating every young person in a fair and inclusive manner.

Young people participate in an excellent range of leisure and recreational activities that help them to enjoy their free time. Over the summer, all young people experienced individual holidays. These diverse activities provide excellent opportunities for personal development and fulfilment.

Young people are effectively helped through their education because of strong links between the home and schools. Some young people, who have significant histories of non-attendance, have overcome their difficulties because of the staff team's realistic expectations and very practical support. For example, staff support young people to continue in their school placements which they were attending prior to living at the home and, where required, will transport young people to their school. As a direct result of these arrangements, young people's attendance and attainment are either maintained or improve. Staff also successfully support other development initiatives such as work experience. These initiatives result in young people being able to think ahead in terms of what they want to do when they leave school and start college. They benefit from careers advice and guidance that successfully help them match their aspirations to vocational and occupational opportunities.

Young people are actively involved in the decoration and layout of the home and garden. Over the summer, they have particularly enjoyed being outside in the garden. One young person was proud to show the inspector the den, complete with fairy lights, that she had created, complete with fairy lights.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Safeguarding young people is at the very heart of the staff team's everyday practice. The registered manager and staff team confidently meet their responsibilities to keep young people safe.	

They make sure that the quality of care young people experience is of a consistently high standard and prioritises their welfare. As a result, young people feel safe and secure. If young people place themselves at risk, they know that staff will do all that they can to safeguard them. Open and honest discussions take place between staff and young people on a day-to-day basis. These conversations help young people to change behaviours and learn new skills to help keep them safe.

The registered manager and staff team are tenacious and resilient in their care practice. The staff ethos is not to give up on young people, but instead to focus on the gains that young people make and how they can sustain this progress into their future. This means that staff are continually looking ahead and planning for the challenges that young people may face as they move towards increased independence.

Staff apply consistently positive and proactive behaviour management strategies. Staff have, on occasion, managed very complex high-risk behaviours which have resulted in significant damage to property, and self-harming incidents. Considering the very high levels of risk, incidents have significantly reduced because staff have sensitively managed these situations very effectively using de-escalation techniques. Potential incidents have been avoided because staff recognise indicators and triggers to different behaviours, and use their meaningful relationships with young people and their skills to prevent an escalation to more serious incidents.

Young people benefit exceptionally well from well-established routines and procedures that explicitly recognise the need to protect and safeguard everyone. All staff are very aware of intervention strategies that consistently and successfully help young people avoid, address and modify risk-taking behaviours. A behaviour consultant stated, 'Staff are open and work well with other agencies to provide the care deserved by young people.' Staff consistently promote and praise positive behaviours. The use of more formal measures of control are only used when necessary. Staff use their training to excellent effect by focusing on the young people's achievements, and regularly talking to them about coping strategies and experiences. Young people understand that staff take full account of their difficult past experiences and try to help them to make positive changes. Young people are encouraged to act with consideration to everyone.

The registered manager and staff team ensure that the well-being and safety of young people is met at all times. Their working knowledge of safeguarding, missing from care and child sexual exploitation procedures is supported by regular, good-quality training and research. This ensures that they are able to meet the individual needs of young people and work effectively in partnership with other agencies. Young people told the inspector that staff keep them safe in a wide range of ways. This includes young people saying that staff are 'very internet conscious', 'they listen to my issues', 'they stay in touch with me at all times' and 'they help me to understand my emotions and anxieties'.



Staff have an excellent understanding of the challenges faced by young people. Staff attend specific, detailed training and group sessions on the principles of dyadic developmental psychotherapy or practice (DDP) and use theory such as PACE (playfulness-acceptance-curiosity-empathy) in their day-to-day work. They also work alongside a mental health practitioner who develops their understanding of emotional and mental health and attachment difficulties, including developmental trauma, loss and separation. These excellent professional development opportunities mean staff stay up to date with research and practice which they apply in their everyday care of young people.

Young people who have significant histories of going missing from care prior to admission to the home, reduce these behaviours. Staff know what to do when these circumstances occur, but their focus is on working together to prevent these incidents from happening in the first place. Staff have successfully helped young people find alternative and safer ways to behave, as well as creating a home environment where young people want to be. When necessary, the registered manager has been robust in chasing return home interviews after missing from care incidents. She has also called risk management meetings and will challenge the local authority when social workers have not invited her to professionals meetings.

The council has introduced a new recording system for physical interventions. This move from paper to online recording is still in its early implementation stage. During this period of transition, the new system is not yet capturing all the required details.

The registered manager and staff ensure that young people have a very safe environment in which to live. The registered manager considers all potential hazards and runs regular meticulous checks, for example on electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. These effective maintenance checks ensure that young people stay safe.

The registered manager ensures that thorough vetting procedures for recruiting staff are in place. This helps to ensure that only suitable people have contact with young people.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The registered manager and staff team have an excellent record of organising the service to ensure that they make a significant and positive impact on the lives of young people, irrespective of their difficulties.	

The registered manager has the highest expectations of her staff team to provide the very best care for young people in their care.

The registered manager is experienced and holds a level 5 diploma in leadership of children and young people health and social care, a national vocational qualification level 3 in health and social care with children and young people, and a degree in leadership and management. These professional qualifications and development enable the registered manager to have an excellent and in-depth knowledge of residential childcare, which she applies in her everyday practice.

The successful progress and safety of young people are given top priority and are monitored by the registered manager. The local authority and registered manager have been proactive in responding to young people's very complex and changing needs. For example, at times, when the need has arisen, staffing has been increased and/or admissions to the home have been put on hold. This has given young people a responsive service that is flexible and accommodating to their individual needs.

Young people told the inspector, that a key strength of this home is the 'incredible' staff team. They are a very stable team of staff who are all very familiar to the young people. As a result, young people experience little disruption to their relationships or attachments. For example, the team always covers any staffing shortfalls. This gives young people consistency of care and maintains the high quality of practice.

Staff have access to a wide range of quality learning and development opportunities. These help to equip them with the skills, understanding and knowledge required to meet the current needs of young people. Staff feel very well supported in their work and can access practical advice and guidance from a range of sources on a daily basis. A strength of this service is the continual development of the staff team. For example, the staff team is supported to undertake level 1 dyadic developmental psychotherapy training, and nurturing and attachment training. This helps to enhance their ongoing professional development.

The registered manager assiduously evaluates the home's operation to ensure that young people's needs are being met. She values the independent visitor's report, which provides a full picture of the home's operation against the children's homes quality standards. The report gives the reader a reflective account of the visitor's activities and findings on how well young people are being looked after. The registered manager appreciates the rigour of these visits and makes good use of the reports to continually develop the service.

The registered manager's quality assurance processes also include gathering feedback from professionals who are involved with the service. Recent feedback from professionals, including social workers is consistently positive, citing the excellent working relationships, effective lines of communication and exceptional outcomes being achieved. The home is operated in a way that consistently focuses everyone on the journey and achievements of the young people.

The registered manager and staff team use feedback to drive up standards within the home and develop the service. They maintain and develop accurate information such as the statement of purpose, children's guide, policies and procedures and research. All these proactive steps help to further strengthen the service.

There is effective partnership work with families and professionals. Where necessary, the registered manager challenges decisions or processes to ensure that her staff team and young people receive excellent support and continue to make outstanding progress.

## 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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