

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC020171
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Arnfield Care Limited
Registered provider address	Brookbank House, Wellington Road, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5JR

Responsible individual	Wayne Relf
Registered manager	Paul Vella
Inspector	Corrinne Barker

Inspection date	12/10/2016
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 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

SC020171

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people feel safe in the home and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Children and young people are engaged in education and make good progress in relation to their attendance and attainment. Staff promote education, valuing the benefits of routine, social interaction and a sense of achievement. Children and young people are encouraged to think positively about future goals. Staff are aspirational for children and young people and open up ideas and possibilities for them.
- Staff work proactively with health colleagues to ensure that children's and young people's health needs are met.
- Children and young people have positive relationships with staff. They develop trusting relationships because staff provide high levels of praise and encouragement alongside structure, routine and consistent boundaries.
- With the support and guidance of staff, children and young people develop strategies to better regulate their emotions. Staff manage challenging behaviour well. Within a short period of time, risk is reduced and young people increasingly make safer choices.
- Risk to children and young people is managed well. Staff are proactive in taking steps to reduce the risks, and work in partnership with others to address issues as they arise. Staff manage challenging behaviour effectively, and follow comprehensive risk and behaviour management plans.
- Staff work well in partnership with professionals and the wider community. Children and young people are given opportunities to take part in a range of activities and be part of the community.
- The strong leadership team has high standards and expectations. Staff are encouraged to use research to inform their practice and continually improve the care that they provide.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that when a young person 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 young person 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This is in particular reference to recording more detail following a physical intervention. Consider making the information more accessible for the child and easier to understand. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/07/2015	Full	Good
26/02/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/10/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>From their starting points, children and young people make good progress in all aspects of their lives. A robust matching process is in place, which supports staff to carefully consider any new admissions to the home. This ensures that staff are confident that they can meet the child's or young person's individual needs. Equally, consideration is given to children and young people already living in the home to make sure that their progress is not affected by the new admission.</p> <p>The standard of care provided to children and young people is very good, with some outstanding features. The management team promotes research-based practice and supports innovative ideas to develop its work. Staff feel well trained, listened to and supported. Children and young people benefit from a stable staff team. This enables children and young people to form trusting, secure relationships with staff. Staff show emotional warmth towards children and young people and use praise frequently to reward positive behaviour.</p> <p>One of the strengths of the home is getting children and young people back into education, giving them the routine, structure, confidence and self-belief that they need. All children and young people are in full-time education, tailored to their individual needs. Staff work in partnership with local schools and with placing authorities. Staff have successfully supported children and young people into full-time, mainstream education. This supports children's and young people's integration into the community. Staff have arranged for young people to visit colleges and universities to show them what they can aspire to, and enable them to hear that these aspirations are achievable. There is an ethos of it never being too late to make the right choices.</p> <p>Children's and young people's health needs are well met, with specialist support identified quickly if needed.</p> <p>Staff promote activities so that children and young people have opportunities to develop social skills, make friends and expend energy positively. An active lifestyle also helps children and young people to form better sleep patterns. Friends are invited to the home, and children and young people are encouraged to have friends in the community.</p> <p>Staff support children and young people to maintain family relationships when appropriate. Staff facilitate contact and work with placing authorities to achieve objectives set in care plans, such as family reunification. Staff have good insight into how complex family relationships and dynamics impact on children and young people. Children and young people have access to mental health services and are encouraged to talk to staff about their feelings. They develop skills and strategies</p>	

to recognise difficult feelings so that they can regulate their emotions and presenting behaviour. Staff are very skilled in modelling behaviour and gently supporting children and young people to make safe choices.

Young people are prepared for moving on to independence. Staff work with young people to develop independent living skills, such as cooking and budgeting. Staff support children and young people, from the outset, in their social and emotional development, encouraging resilience, self-esteem and reflection. As young people prepare to leave care, this social and emotional development supports their transitions.

Children and young people have a clear voice in the home. They are encouraged to take part in children's meetings and in consultation, as well as key-work sessions. Staff share their team meeting minutes with children and young people by producing a child-friendly version. This ensures that children and young people can see how decisions are made. There is a good link between staff team meetings and children's meetings, which means that actions arising from these meetings are addressed promptly.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Children and young people live in an environment where they feel safe. One child commented that if he was worried about something he could go to any of the staff, and added, 'They would all help me.' Children and young people experience consistent care from a stable, well-trained, staff team.</p> <p>Staff work in partnership with other professionals and communicate well. One health professional commented on how quickly staff had made her aware of a recent safeguarding issue, and this enabled her to respond effectively and to play a full role in the multi-agency response. Senior staff have a sound awareness of safeguarding and child protection processes.</p> <p>For the majority of children and young people, risk is substantially reduced as a result of living in the home. Staff manage difficult and challenging behaviour very well and use a range of skills and interventions to support children and young people. Staff model behaviour effectively and provide very consistent and dependable care. Staff maintain clear boundaries and expectations. They also use positive reinforcement and praise to help children and young people to make better choices. Staff sometimes utilise outdoor activities or time off site as an intervention</p>	

to address negative or risk-taking behaviour.

Physical intervention is rarely used to manage behaviour. When staff have had to restrain a child or young person, this has been well documented. The member of staff involved is debriefed, as well as the child or young person involved. Staff use a pre-formatted book to record all information relating to the restraint. Additional information is added, such as any direct work with the child or young person. The pre-formatted book does not allow much space for an age-appropriate description of the restraint, which might help children or young people to understand what has been written and to reflect on what has taken place. A recommendation has been made to consider how the recording of restraints can be made more accessible to children and young people.

Staff, in partnership with other professionals, are able to identify risks and strategies to reduce risks. Each child has a comprehensive behaviour and risk management plan. Staff are clear that they need to follow these plans and update plans as risks change. Managers have good oversight of these plans.

One social worker commented on how successful the staff response had been to a young person who was frequently going missing from the home. The social worker said that living in the home had been a very positive experience for the young person. Following a successful multi-agency intervention, the missing episodes had stopped.

Staff manage incidents of children and young people going missing from the home appropriately, following procedures to support children's and young people's safe return. However, independent return interviews do not always take place. A recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that the placing authority provides the opportunity for children and young people to have an independent return interview. This remains an area for improvement. A further recommendation will be made to ensure that staff actively pursue this with placing authorities, following a missing episode.

Children and young people are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks, such as spending free time in the community, or using public transport. These activities are risk assessed and reviewed on a regular basis.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager holds a social work qualification and is very experienced	

and skilled in his role. He promotes a strong ethos for the home, with children and young people being central to everything that the staff do. The home is welcoming, relaxing and well maintained. The manager is clear that this is the children's and young people's home and somewhere they should feel comfortable.

The manager is ambitious for children and young people and helps them to think positively about the future. The manager works in partnership with other professionals to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. The progress and welfare of children and young people are kept under review, with staff identifying issues quickly as they arise. Occasionally, a child's or young person's progress has stalled. This has happened recently, and staff picked this up very quickly and worked alongside the placing authority to devise a plan to address the situation.

Staff have access to a good range of training. The manager offers staff the opportunity to develop their understanding and knowledge by sharing research and introducing theoretical frameworks to underpin the work that they do. There is some evidence of research informing practice, and this is particularly helpful for staff in relation to children and young people who have complex individual needs. Induction processes are good, and the manager is developing these further. Staff have regular supervision, ensuring that they can reflect on practice and have the opportunity to discuss their own professional development. Staff retention is good. Staff are confident in their safeguarding roles, and any risks are managed effectively.

Quality assurance systems work well, enabling the manager to have good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the home. External monitoring of the home is used to good effect in driving up standards. However, some policies have not been reviewed by the given date, and the system for archiving older versions of policies and guides is not robust. This does not affect the care of the children and young people in the home, but may cause confusion for new staff. Case records are clearly written and well maintained. Plans and risk assessments have good management oversight.

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 that 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 that 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 whom 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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