

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Unique reference number	1227596
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Reflexion Care Group Limited
Registered provider address	Black Birches, Hadnall, Shrewsbury SY4 3DH

Responsible individual	Gregory Watson
Registered manager	Maxwell Turner
Inspector	Elaine Cray

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

1227596

Summary of findings

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

- Staff show high levels of respect for the children and young people in their care. Staff, children and young people exude pride. They cheerfully refer to a range of photos and key-working records to exemplify happy memories and the significant progress that children and young people make.
- Care in the home is based on nurture, play and activities and the staff team provides a combination of skills and qualities to ensure that this is achieved.
- Rapport between staff, children and young people is extremely nurturing and creates an environment where everyone looks out for each other. Children and young people live together harmoniously and there are no concerns about bullying.
- Safeguarding and behaviour management are exceptional strengths. Attention to detail enables staff to understand the triggers and intricacies to managing children's and young people's anxieties. Staff are resilient and cohesive, so children and young people have a clear sense of safety and consistent care.
- Leadership and staff commitment is an outstanding feature of this home. Social workers fully appreciate the resilience and commitment shown by staff and say, 'Staff ability to communicate with professionals and a child in very difficult circumstances was exceptional.'
- While there are outstanding features to this home, some areas still require development. For example, not all children and young people attend full-time education. Staff will be better prepared to meet the home's statement of purpose with further staff training in autistic spectrum disorder. Children and young people do not have up-to-date information about contact details for the Children's Commissioner.

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 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
<p>8: The education standard:</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2)(a)(iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers.</p>	31/01/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard:</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>This is with particular regard to updating staff training in supporting children and young people who have autistic spectrum disorder.</p>	31/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the home's first inspection.		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>Children and young people experience a strong sense of nurture and stability due to high quality relationships with staff. Children and young people live harmoniously and there are no concerns about bullying. They feel valued and make good progress across all aspects of growing up.</p> <p>Staff hold children's and young people's education as a high priority. While some young people are not yet in full-time education, their attendance is improving and engagement with learning is much better than in previous placements. These young people spend a large part of their education time in Outward Bound and environmental projects. Young people now hope that the significant improvements in behaviour will enable them to return to formal education and go to school with other young people.</p> <p>Staff work extremely hard with placing and education authorities to identify the best education placements for children and young people. They go above and beyond to provide continuity of education. Staff are excellent advocates, and will challenge professionals when decisions do not promote the best interests of children and young people.</p> <p>The registered manager says, 'There are two main pillars – care and education. Not moving one when moving the other one is the key thing.' This ethos is carried through, as staff transport and support children to travel to and attend their own familiar school. This stability is important to younger children who are embarking on their first experience of settling into a children's home.</p> <p>Well-planned night time and morning routines help children and young people to prepare for and positively engage with school. Staff also use night-time routines to maximise opportunities to support children's and young people's emotional welfare and development. For example, sharing of hard-copy and audio books provides children and young people with calming bedtime stories, and also introduces them to reading. All children's and young people's reading abilities and enjoyment in books improve as a result of living at this home.</p> <p>Staff make concerted efforts to encourage children and young people to make positive associations away from the home. Working in close partnership with agencies enables some young people with significantly challenging and risky behaviours to access community activities. Effective partnership working and risk management mean that young people can now meet and learn to socialise with others outside of the care system. Taking part in a range of activities, such as</p>	

swimming, trampolining and football promotes an excellent balance between enjoyment and good health.

Involvement in local activities is particularly important for younger children who are educated outside of their local community. For example, joining a local football team gives children access to a network of new friends. This enables them to enjoy the usual childhood experiences, such as having friends to visit for tea and to play out with.

High quality and engaging key working enables children and young people to explore their strengths and work on their behaviour. Simplistic and practical points for discussion such as: 'What we did', 'Why we did it' and 'How it went' enable children to engage and keep a record of their experiences at the home.

Staff are skilled and creative in the work they do with children and young people. Building a barbeque, maintaining the garden and playing football with staff are great times for children and young people to talk through their worries and how they are feeling.

Social workers are pleased with children's and young people's progress. Staff ensure that care and key working is focused and integral to the placing authorities' placement plans, enabling firm partnership working.

Collaborative work between staff and placing social workers also result in children and young people developing a greater understanding of their backgrounds. For example, they are able to build stronger identities and clarity about their early childhood as social workers and staff sort through an assortment of photos that children have brought to the home.

Regular health checks and staff encouragement to eat healthily promote children's and young people's good health outcomes. Trusting relationships with staff and engagement with therapy enable children and young people to explore and improve their emotional and mental health. Children and young people become more resilient and emotionally mature as a result of engaging in talking and play therapy to explore their childhood experiences.

Children and young people live in a comfortable home, which is designed to meet and adapt to their needs. For example, a choice of communal rooms gives children and young people plenty of space and privacy. Different size bedrooms mean that children and young people can choose between a small cosy room and a large spacious environment, depending on their needs.

Helping with chores around the house enables children and young people to make a useful contribution to the upkeep of the home and to develop useful independence skills. This sense of belonging and pride in their home is a significant improvement for some young people, as they now refrain from extensively

damaging their physical environment.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
<p>The quality of care and safeguarding is outstanding, due to a sound and effective care planning framework. Risk and behaviour management plans used by staff set out strategies to consistently keep children and young people safe from risk, and fully support their welfare.</p> <p>Missing from home procedures are maintained up to date due to regular discussions with the police. Police officers are very positive about the staff and say, 'They love their jobs and have always got time', and '[They are] so responsive to anything new we introduce.' Excellent partnership working results in individualised missing from care protocols which respond to each child's or young person's vulnerability. There are no concerns about child sexual exploitation at this home.</p> <p>Children and young people experience significant improvements in behaviour. Staff are highly skilled in building relationships. Children and young people develop trust, stability and security because staff never give up and remain resilient in the face of some extreme and dangerous behaviours.</p> <p>Staff have an excellent insight into children's and young people's backgrounds and reasons for behaviours. They consistently implement agreed behaviour management plans. There is an excellent balance between clear boundaries and understanding the triggers for children's and young people's anxieties and resulting challenging behaviours.</p> <p>Staff are also innovative when supporting children and young people to manage their behaviour better. For example, practising snorkelling in the bath becomes a fun way for children and young people to initiate and now maintain regular bathing routines.</p> <p>Children and young people are very proud of the possessions they have now earned as a result of an excellently managed reward system. Positive role-modelling by staff is also important to promoting positive behaviours for children and young people. For example, having a first haircut at the same time as a favourite member of staff was a great day out for one young person. Photos of this experience take pride of place in key-working records. Good personal hygiene, keeping fit, losing weight and buying clothes are now a favourite part of children's and young people's routines in the home as they are routinely rewarded for their</p>	

efforts.

The need for physical intervention with children and young people is thoroughly assessed. Children's and young people's needs and previous experiences remain at the centre of staff practice. While some children and young people present extreme behaviours towards their physical environment, the use of physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort when individuals are at risk of harm.

The registered manager and staff take ownership of challenging and difficult placements. Commitment, resilience and staff knowledge about behaviour management mean that children and young people are not criminalised in the face of extreme and risk-taking behaviours.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
<p>The registered manager has been in post since February 2016 when this home was first registered. He has extensive experience and a suitable level 4 qualification in management. He is measured and strategic in building a staff team to meet the needs of children and young people.</p> <p>The manager and staff team competently meet the statement of purpose of the home. Compatibility assessments for children and young people are very effective. Children and young people experience positive relationships due to good moving-in plans and positive matching of children and young people to each other and to the skill-set of the staff.</p> <p>Decisions regarding difficult placements are not taken lightly by the management team. When a placement becomes untenable, staff work alongside the placing authority to develop sensitive moving-on plans. The registered manager also remains intrinsically involved with some young people's ongoing placement planning. This post-placement relationship is due to the exceptional insight that he and staff have gained about the needs and behavioural challenges of young people.</p> <p>Managers organise training to ensure seamless progression from induction, probationary training and then timely registration for a level 3 diploma in caring for children. All experienced staff have completed their level 3 qualification. New staff rate induction training very highly; they are keen to progress in their probationary period and value the on-going training they receive.</p>	

The manager makes sure that staff are suitably trained for many different and complex behaviours and risks. Recent training in radicalisation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation keeps staff up to date with these emerging trends within children's social care. Further staff training in autistic spectrum disorder will extend the already excellent skill-set of the staff team and prepare for future placements to the home.

Children and young people experience a firm sense of permanency with no agency staff working at the home. The registered manager maximises his responsibilities for managing two homes as he expertly interchanges staff to meet children's and young people's needs. Children and young people look forward to spending time with staff as they move between the homes. These flexible staffing arrangements give greater scope to cover in staffing effectively, annual leave, staff meetings and training.

Staff are highly motivated and have a strong belief in the registered manager's leadership style. They feel supported, well-developed and they work as a cohesive team. Research by Pavlov, Skinner and Wolfensberger inform staff practice and provide an excellent focus on engagement in positive activities and reinforcement of behaviour.

Staff recording and respect for children and young people is exceptional. Staff place children and young people at the centre of their recording. 'What we did' records include photos and short write-ups of key-working so that children and young people can understand why a discussion or activity took place. Children and young people are intrinsically involved in their care and therefore invest in improving their behaviour and achievements.

Children's and young people's consultation and participation are key features in the running of the home. For example, the young people's guide provides excellent information to children and young people. The interactive process of filling in the document with staff is extremely useful for younger children and those with learning disabilities currently living at the home.

Children and young people are keen to express their views because staff and social workers consistently listen and act on their ideas. They express their views in young people's meetings, and key-working is a powerful tool for expression and discussion. Making decisions about menus, activities and key-working topics gives them an excellent sense of self-determination and independence.

Children and young people also have meaningful information about how to complain. They say that they feel listened to and experience trusting relationships and this leads to a decrease in the levels of complaints made in previous placements. Information about agencies who can advocate on children's and young people's behalf does not include up-to-date information about the Children's Commissioner.

Quality of care is assured with regular monitoring. Independent visits are extremely positive and show good compliance with regulations and quality standards. This is the home's first inspection and comments from professionals, such as, 'Wonderful – nothing bad to say and a really lovely company that works wonders', and, 'If you were a mum and your child had to go into care then you would want them to come here', reinforce the exceptional commitment by the management and staff team to children and young people in their care.

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'.

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