

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	21/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC036732
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Lynda Rhodes
Inspector	Catherine Honey

Inspection date	21/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The home continues to provide a good standard of care and support to the children and young people who visit for short breaks. The staff know the children and young people very well. They are committed to meeting the children's and young people's needs and to ensuring that they have many new and interesting experiences during their stays. One young person described the home as, 'awesome'. Staff plan for each individual child or young person's stay, ensuring that activities they take part in meet their individual needs, likes and dislikes. Activities are carefully balanced to provide young people with relaxation time after school, as well as active time and constructive activities. Doors to the expansive garden are kept unlocked, meaning children and young people can move inside and outside whenever they wish to. The well-equipped garden gives children and young people the opportunity to roam and play freely, or use carts and other outdoor equipment. One member of staff commented, 'It allows young people their independence, but we are able to keep an eye on them from a distance.'</p> <p>At the previous inspection, two requirements and two recommendations were made. These related to fire safety, recruitment, the independent visitor consulting with young people, and safeguarding training. Both requirements and both recommendations have been met. Some children and young people have taken part in planned fire evacuations and there is a plan in place to try and ensure that all children and young people have this opportunity during the year. Where young people are reluctant to leave the home during a drill, staff use communication aids to help young people understand the importance of fire safety. This improved practice means children and young people have a better awareness of what to do in the event of a fire. The manager has devised a checklist to ensure that appropriate recruitment checks, including verification of references, is carried out. This helps ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children and young people.</p> <p>The home's independent visitor has visited the home at a time when children, young people, parents and carers were at the home, enabling her to gather their views and opinions. This helps make her evaluation of the safety and welfare of children and young people more robust. The revised workforce plan now makes clear which training for staff is mandatory and how often it should be refreshed.</p>	

The staff team has undertaken specific training in safeguarding children who have disabilities, helping to ensure that children and young people are cared for by staff with up-to-date knowledge. In addressing the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection, managers have helped maintain the good quality of care children and young people receive.

There are good levels of partnership working with parents, carers and the different agencies involved in children and young people's lives. Keyworkers ensure that they maintain regular contact with parents and carers and attend all multi-agency meetings. This helps ensure that information about young people's needs is shared to enable consistent care. Since the last inspection, a new young person has begun receiving short breaks. This transition was managed sensitively, paying close attention to the young person's and their family's needs.

Children and young people are kept safe during their short break visits because there are good staffing ratios and they are supervised well. Staff are fully aware of the vulnerability of the children and young people that they care for and are fully committed to keeping them safe. Each child or young person has a detailed care plan that staff are familiar with. This addresses how to recognise triggers and prevent escalation. Incidents where young people become unsettled or show difficult behaviour are well managed by staff, who are able to de-escalate situations and help young people feel comfortable again. This works effectively. There has been only one physical intervention since the last inspection.

The management team has a good oversight of the home and knows the children and young people well. The team spends time with the children and young people and discusses their needs with the staff through daily handovers, team meetings and supervision. Records such as care plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and well implemented in practice by staff. However, on one young person's file, the risk assessment and an allergy protocol were undated and unsigned, making it unclear who has oversight of these documents to confirm if the information is correct and whether the files have been shared with parents or carers.

Information about this children's home

The home is run by the local authority and is registered to provide short breaks for a maximum of eight children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/01/2016	Full	Good
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 recommendation:

- The registered manager should ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date and signed and dated, with particular reference to risk assessments and health care plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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