

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	09/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC032838
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	Appletree Treatment Centre Limited
Registered provider address	Meathop Park, Meathop, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6RF

Responsible individual	Clair Davies
Registered manager	Amanda Fishwick
Inspector	Charlie Bamber

Inspection date	09/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.</p> <p>The home currently has a settled cohort of children who are progressing well. From their point of placement, children's behaviour and emotional presentation improves significantly as they learn to self-regulate and to better understand their emotional responses. Their emotional needs are met through the provision of therapy and high-level care delivered by well-trained staff.</p> <p>Children are helped to deal with issues that cause them anxiety. Staff are creative in their implementation of ideas to reduce worries for children. They use a variety of strategies including a mood board, worry plaque, a worry monster which eats their worries and fairies who sprinkle fairy dust. Children fully engage themselves in these approaches, which additionally develop their imagination.</p> <p>Children have ample opportunities to play. Staff engage them in healthy outdoor activities such as football, walks and skate parks, as well as indoor activities such as reading, playing board games and cooking. An on-site cook provides balanced meals and also helps children begin to learn to cook themselves with support and encouragement. Children are also involved in a variety of activities within the local community such as School of Rock, youth club, tennis, swimming and sensory play, which allow them to build relationships outside of the home and develop socially.</p> <p>All children attend the on-site school. One child is now accessing a half-day education at a mainstream local primary school, which is a significant achievement. Educational progress for some is a particular area of strength. Children's attendance is very high and the home maintains very good communication with the school.</p> <p>Children present as happy and report positively about living at the home. Observation of them evidences that they have positive relationships with each other and with staff. Good levels of staffing allow children to have sufficient individual attention.</p> <p>Admissions to the home are very well considered and matching is of a high standard, ensuring that only children whose needs can be met within the</p>	

placement are admitted. Children are well prepared to move on and many are preparing for transitions into foster care over the coming months.

The home has a very good understanding of individual children's risks. Due to the ages of the children, risks arise mainly from their interpersonal relationships and their emotional regulation. Staff understand children's personal histories which affect their behaviour and usually work with them in sensitive and creative ways to reduce episodes of challenging or inappropriate behaviour. Issues such as going missing from home, drug misuse, child sexual exploitation and criminal behaviour are not apparent in this group of children.

One significant safeguarding incident has affected some young people in the home and had an impact on the home's judgement at this inspection. A physical intervention was used to enforce compliance and was not in line with techniques approved for use by the home. A child witnessing this intervention was distressed, as was the child involved in the hold. Staff witnessing this intervention did not act immediately and intervene to ensure the child's safety and did not follow the company's whistleblowing policy in a sufficiently timely manner to ensure that all children were safeguarded. Two requirements are made in respect of this incident. While this was an isolated incident, the severity of it is sufficient to determine an overall judgement of declined in effectiveness. Positively, once staff had whistle blown, the management of the incident was very robust and ensured that children's safety was subsequently prioritised.

There has been a recent rise in the number of restrictive physical interventions occurring in the home. Managers are alert to this and are working alongside school staff to identify triggers, patterns and trends. Children are rewarded for managing their behaviours without the need for physical management. Managers have a good understanding of issues affecting young people which may contribute to increasing challenging behaviours that result in interventions. Although there has been one incident of misuse of physical intervention, managers are clear that staff may only use restrictive physical intervention to prevent harm to a child or others, and not for any other reason.

Complaints and allegations are dealt with robustly by managers. Thorough investigations take place, relevant agencies are contacted, and outcomes are clear and are communicated appropriately. Staff are well supported through investigations into allegations and report positively of the process.

Managers at the home are committed to driving continuous improvement. They have a very good understanding of the home and use monitoring systems to identify areas for development and improvement.

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home. It provides a service for up to eight children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/07/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/06/2015	Full	Good
11/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. Specifically, this relates to ensuring that staff follow the whistleblowing policy in a timely manner. (Regulation 12(2)(vii))	10/04/2017
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. (Regulation 19 (1) (2))	10/04/2017

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 whom 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'.

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017