

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	29/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC055780
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	Autism Initiatives (UK)
Registered provider address	Sefton House, Bridle Road, Bootle, Merseyside L30 4XR

Responsible individual	Katharine Silver
Registered manager	Karen Taylor
Inspector	Karen Willson

Inspection date	29/03/2017
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 improved effectiveness.</p> <p>There have been no admissions to or discharges from the home since the last inspection. Young people who live in the home continue to thrive and make sustained progress. They benefit from strong relationships with the staff team, which knows them extremely well. One parent said that the home is 'absolutely amazing and supports the family as well... they do everything to support [the young person] and identify lots of strategies to help... they're brilliant.' The support for families was recognised by another parent, who described the staff team as 'brilliant' and 'couldn't want for anything better'. A parent of a young person, who is now 18, described how the home is 'adaptable, and goes the extra mile'; for example, to buy tattoo pens and arrange for a temporary tattoo to be done at a professional studio to enable her child to have a unique experience.</p> <p>Relationships between young people and staff were observed to be affectionate and warm. One young person was teasing the staff during teatime that he did not want his favourite food, with a huge smile on his face. Another was keen to speak with the inspector to ask what her favourite thing was in the young person's bedroom and to pass comment about her nail colour, before helping the registered manager to log a repair that was needed. Staff are sensitive to young people's presentations and offer distractions, in calm, reassuring tones, to prevent them from becoming distressed, or from hurting themselves.</p> <p>Young people are effectively safeguarded. An advocate stated that, although she is known at the home, staff always follow procedures to request identification and ensure that she signs the visitor's book on every visit. Appropriately high levels of supervision mean that there are no missing from home events or incidents between young people. One young person, who is sensitive to the noise levels of others, will now independently go to another area of the home where it is quieter. There is a small lodge in the garden where he likes to go before breakfast as part of his routine, which reduces the likelihood of any incidents. When any incidents do happen, staff take care to work with young people to help prevent them reoccurring, such as mapping out preferred routes to activities. Physical intervention is kept to a low level and is used only to ensure the safety of young people or others. Young people are encouraged to complain when they are unhappy. For example, when there was an interruption to the home's wi-fi, a young person complained so that the computer department knew how important it</p>	

was for the young person to be able to Facetime with family. A parent's complaint was resolved swiftly to demonstrate that procedures had been followed, but acknowledged she had not been contacted immediately, and remedial measures were put in place. Disciplinary action was taken with regard to a member of staff's conduct, with appropriate contact being made with the designated officer. Staff described their clear understanding of safeguarding procedures to follow. A photograph of the inspector was sent to the school, and put on the noticeboard in the home so that young people could see what she looked like before meeting her. As a result, young people feel safe and listened to.

The registered manager carefully considers referrals for new admissions to the home, both with regard to the young person referred and to young people already living in the home. She has recently declined a referral because the property could not be adapted to meet the young person's needs as part of an introductory period, and would restrict access for those who already live there. This demonstrates that the registered manager considers the holistic needs of the young people. The registered manager also ensures that young people have advocates to support their wishes and feelings with respect to moving to adult provision, particularly where placing authorities may be considering changes to care plans. She provides detailed information to support transition planning, ensures that young people's care plans are reviewed by the placing authority prior to their 18th birthday, and that current relevant plans are on file. The home care planning clearly complies with the expectations of the placing authorities in meeting young people's needs and to help them develop and achieve. One social worker commented on the detailed breakdown of a young person's needs, which would help the adult services social worker in planning for a future placement. The home is fully engaged in supporting this young person in their transition to the new placement.

The registered manager and staff continually look at ways in which to improve the service and to give young people the opportunity of new experiences. There is clear partnership working with the school that young people attend and with other professionals. The home works well with community initiatives so that young people are able to participate safely, such as in the local Britain in Bloom project. Activities are being arranged with a social enterprise, which will provide different environments where young people can attend, reflecting their individual needs. Young people also engage in fundraising activities with staff to choose and buy equipment for the garden, which is both fun and helps them keep fit and healthy. The young people access a range of activities such as horse riding, yoga and trampolining, which further support their integration into the local community. Staff commented on how they were really impressed with a young person's unexpected ability to focus and relax in yoga and the positive effect it has. Work undertaken at the home means that one young person is now able to access his local community with his family safely. The home clearly promotes vulnerable young people to participate and staff enthusiastically celebrate their achievements.

Leadership in the home is strong and aspirational. The registered manager promotes professional development by delegating responsibility for specific areas to

individuals, which encourages ownership across the team. Staff receive regular supervision and attend well-structured team meetings. They feel supported by the registered manager, who is driven to make continuous improvements and makes herself available for advice at all times. Staff members are proud to demonstrate improvements made in the home since the last inspection, such as new health plan files and service summaries that are individualised and more clearly document young people's progress. The home plans further improvements to the service summaries to make them dynamic working documents. Changes have been made to the organisation's recording system, which staff use to clearly demonstrate the use of any measures of control or restraint. Records detail the conversations held with young people after any such measure, or provide observations where young people have more limited verbal communication to express themselves.

Robust internal monitoring procedures are in place to identify the progress made by young people and to identify any shortfalls in the service. Young people are involved in making visual presentations to demonstrate their progress. The home uses monthly monitoring to analyse any changes in young people's behaviour so that staff can respond effectively. The organisation's systems are adapted where necessary, so that they fully meet the needs of the home to provide meaningful information and to meet young people's needs. One requirement from the last inspection in relation to external monitoring has not been met. This has not impacted on the welfare of young people because of the thorough monitoring of the quality of care in the home. However, the requirement is repeated to ensure that the registered manager fully benefits from independent external monitoring.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children who may have a learning disability. It is owned by a national independent organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
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
<p>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. This also includes evaluating the quality of the records in the home. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))</p>	04/05/2017

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 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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