

SC429702

Registered provider: The Ryes College Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of three children's homes run by a private organisation, which also operates one school. The home provides accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 April 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 October 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff understand the importance of education and actively encourage the children to attend.

- Staff are consistent about setting boundaries and they appropriately challenge inappropriate behaviours.
- Children are encouraged and supported to take part in a wide variety of activities, both in the home and in the community.
- Children are supported to learn about appropriate risks in consultation with their social workers.
- Children are regularly consulted in a variety of ways. Staff listen, and act on the wishes and feelings of children.
- Staff understand the importance of contact for children with their families, and facilitate this to happen.
- There is a stable, dedicated staff team that knows and understands the individual needs of the children.
- Children say they feel safe in the home and know how to complain.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Children have good placement plans in place, but the children and social workers do not comment or sign to say they have had input into the plans, or understand them.
- There is a comprehensive children's guide, but it does not explain the daily routine for the children.
- The staff have not received their yearly appraisals.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/04/2016	Full	Good
13/01/2016	Full	Good
15/06/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	03/07/17

Recommendations

- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents', supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- Ensure that the children's guide helps children to understand the day-to-day routines of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children have built good relationships with a stable and dedicated staff team. The staff support the children to progress and are proud of the achievements that the children make. A social worker commented, 'The staff have managed to achieve more with him than any previous provision.' A child commented, 'I like living here, and I am doing really well. The staff are really nice, and I can talk to them if I am worried or upset and they help me.'

The staff have a good understanding of why the children are in care. The staff are aware of what the children's individual needs are and the future plans in place for them. This supports the children to understand and start to come to terms with why they are in

care.

The staff see education as an important part of the children's daily life. They support and encourage the children to attend. All of the children are in full-time education and have made good progress. There are good links with the education providers. Talking about one particular child, an education provider commented, 'Prior to moving to the home he had a lot of exclusions due to his behaviour and was on the verge of exclusion. Moving to the home has resulted in a quick, dramatic change, which has been achieved by the staff working consistently with the school. The change in the last year has been an absolute phenomenon. He is very aware that we work in partnership to help him achieve his goals.' Another provider commented about another child, 'He is an amazing young man who has progressed with the encouragement and support of the staff in the home. The school works closely with the manager with communication being of a high level. The staff go above and beyond.' A child commented, 'I'm doing really well at school and now go to college one day a week.'

The children have regular key-work sessions covering a wide variety of topics which help them progress. They have the opportunity to comment and sign the reports of the sessions, which show their involvement and understanding of the sessions. Key workers also run regular sessions based on the child's wishes and feelings, as part of children's consultations.

The staff recognise the children's achievements and celebrate these with certificates, and in key-work sessions. A child proudly showed off a certificate on his bedroom wall, awarded for doing well with his work experience. The staff also record when a child has been helpful or supportive of another child on 'positive comment sheets', which each child signs. This shows the children that they are valued, and that the staff recognise when the children have done well.

There have been 15 sanctions since the last full inspection. These are fair and proportionate. The manager evaluates each sanction to ensure that each one is appropriate. The children comment and sign each entry, which shows that the children have understood why the sanction is in place.

The children's health needs are promoted. All children are registered with the local doctor, dentist and opticians. The staff support the children to attend routine health appointments. There is good communication between the staff and specialist health professionals, who have also trained the staff in more complex health needs. A health risk assessment has also been completed for one child with input from the paediatric nurse. The staff are proactive in gaining information and specialist training to support and meet the children's needs.

The children are supported and encouraged to cook and eat healthy meals. During the Easter break, they took part in a health-busting competition with the staff, where they had to participate in daily exercise and eat healthily. The children were keen to show the chart, which showed what they and the staff had achieved over the two-week period.

The staff understand the importance of the children having a wide variety of activities, both in the home and in the community. This gives the children new experiences and the opportunity to develop and maintain friendships with their peers. A parent commented, 'He likes the amount of activities he goes on and I think this has helped him manage his behaviours.' A child who was due to go on a residential trip was becoming anxious, as he would be going to an unknown place. The staff recognised that this would be a valuable experience, and before the trip with the school they took him to the area, over a period of a few weekends, so that he could familiarise himself with the surroundings. He was then able to attend the four-day trip and has since built his confidence to attend further trips with the school. The staff are proactive in looking at how they can support the children to have the same opportunities as their peers.

The children are supported to maintain positive friendships. A child commented, 'My best friend at school has moved away which made me very sad. Staff have helped me stay in contact by using email and I can also phone him.' The staff understand the importance of children maintaining friendships, and staying in touch with friends who are an important part of their lives.

There are regular house meetings, which all children attend. The children have the opportunity to discuss any worries or concerns, as well as planning activities and purchases for the home. The manager has individual monthly consultation meetings with the children. A parent commented, 'He is always included in any meetings and staff always ask him about his wishes and feelings.' This shows that the staff and the manager are proactive in looking at a range of ways they consult with children.

Staff understand the importance of contact for both the children and their families. The support that staff provide is in line with the social workers' care plans. All of the children have had increased contact since coming to the home, and for some the visits are now unsupervised. A parent commented, 'The staff transport him for home contact and are always reliable and happy to support contact. They are available for help and support when he's at home.'

The staff have built positive relationships with parents. A parent commented, 'Staff keep in contact with me and share good and bad news. I have visited the home and staff are welcoming.' Another commented, 'The staff are really good at communicating with me. He's come a long way.'

The children are supported in developing their independence in line with their age, understanding and ability. One child was eager to share that he now walks to and from his youth club. Another child is now able to have some free time in the community. The children were able to explain how they keep themselves safe while in the community, and what to do if they are worried while out. This shows that the staff are not risk-averse and teach children how to manage risk while they are out in the community.

The children have individual incentive targets. The children are involved in setting the targets and can plan their reward when a target is achieved. A child has recently earned an extra weekly activity for achieving one of his set targets. This enables the children to

achieve further progress.

The children have individual placement plans in place. The plans are detailed and support the staff to work with the children on all aspects of their lives. However, the children and social workers do not comment on or sign these plans, to show that they have had input into, or understand, the plans in place. This could lead to inconsistency when staff are working with the children.

There is a comprehensive children's guide. It explains about the home but not the day-to-day routines, which would ensure that the children understand what happens during the day.

The home is large and spacious and has undergone some redecoration since the last inspection. The upstairs bathroom has been updated, making it feel more modern. There is a large, well-equipped kitchen, which has been redecorated. The dining room, which has also been redecorated, is bright and welcoming and the hub of the home. The children have had their bedrooms redecorated. These are individualised and personalised. The children were proud to show these off.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff challenge any unwanted behaviours and reinforce boundaries. A social worker commented, 'He is a different lad now. He has found his voice and is taking responsibility for his actions, managing his emotions and communicating his feelings and has made huge progress.' A parent commented, 'He is changing for the better due to consistent boundaries being put in place.'

During the inspection, there were observations of good interactions between the staff and the children. The staff welcome the children back from school and ask them about their day. The staff ensure that they eat with the children and use appropriate banter to engage with them. The evening meal was relaxed, with lots of different conversations taking place.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. They outline the risks, and the strategies in place for managing challenging behaviours safely. These are regularly reviewed, and amended when necessary.

Health and safety checks are completed and up to date. An area risk assessment is in place, which outlines potential risks in the area and actions for risk reduction.

Children say they feel safe living in the home. One child commented, 'I feel safe because the staff look after me and teach me to look after myself.' A parent commented, 'His confidence has grown because he is being safely cared for.'

There have been three incidents of a child leaving the home without authority. The staff have a good relationship with the local police, who commented that staff at the home

have made significant progress with the children with regard to missing-from-care incidents. The staff actively look for the children, and there has been a significant decrease in incidents since the last inspection. The children have return-to-home interviews with their social workers.

Staff report any concerns to the designated officer, who commented, 'Communication has greatly improved over the past year. The staff err on the side of caution which I am happy with as this ensures that any safeguarding matters will not be overlooked.'

There has been one incident of a child being bullied. There is good evidence that demonstrates that both the victim and the perpetrator were spoken to and the issue resolved. This shows that the staff take any issues of bullying seriously.

The staff understand the importance of transitions into the home and the impact this can have on the children living in the home, and inform them of any new admissions. Staff understand the importance of children having positive endings to their placement. Children who are leaving have the opportunity to go out for a meal, and have an activity of their choice with staff and other children.

One child has moved into the home since the last full inspection. There was a robust transition. The child was met by the manager before coming to the home for a visit. One child has left the home since the last inspection and has moved into independent living near to his home. His social worker commented, 'I am most impressed with the way the home worked with me in planning the transitional move through a very challenging time.'

The children know how to complain. There have been two complaints since the last full inspection, which have been resolved in a timely way. The children have the opportunity to sign and comment to say they are happy with the outcome. Children say they would speak to staff if they had a complaint, and staff would help them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since May 2012 and has the relevant experience and qualifications to manage the home. She has a clear vision for the home and recognises the strengths, and the areas that she would like to develop.

There were two requirements from the last inspection, which have both been met. There were also three recommendations made, two of which have been met and one of which will be repeated.

The staff have good insight into the children's needs and behaviours and treat them as individuals, and with dignity and respect. There is good communication between the staff and social workers. A social worker commented, 'Staff are consistent with good communication.'

There are regular staff meetings. These give the staff the opportunity to discuss the children, care practice and any other issues that arise.

Recruitment is robust. Staff cannot begin to work in the home until all checks have been received and verified.

There is adequate staffing in the home. The staff will cover shifts, or staff will come from the sister homes, to ensure that the rota is covered. The staff understand the importance of having a team that knows and understands the children, and any risks to safeguarding them.

The staff spoken to understand the strengths of the home. They actively work with the children to give them a positive experience of their time in the home. The children who have moved on often contact the staff and talk about their memories of living in the home. This shows that the children recognise that the staff are an important part of their lives.

Most of the staff have completed their national vocational qualification level 3. The newest member of staff has been enrolled and has begun their level 3 qualification. All of the staff have completed, and are up to date with, their mandatory training. The manager has accessed more specialised training for staff to support them working with more complex children.

The manager has good relationships with a wide range of professionals who work with the children, including health professionals, the youth offending service and the police, to support children in staying safe, and with their progression.

Monitoring is robust. The manager, with support from the deputy, performs daily and weekly checks. The responsible individual also undertakes monthly checks to ensure that any care practice issues are addressed.

The staff receive regular supervision. However, the staff have not received their yearly appraisals to support them with their personal development.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out

under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC429702

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Ryes College Limited

Registered provider address: Suite 2E, Skyview Business Centre, Churchfield Road, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2YA

Responsible individual: James Fischer II

Registered manager: Sharon Broadley

Inspector(s)

Trish Palmer, social care inspector

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