

1183574

Registered provider: Cheshire West and Chester Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is run and managed by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
---	-------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because

- Young people are exceptionally well cared for by staff who clearly demonstrate their commitment to meeting their individual needs and keeping them safe.
- Young people continue to thrive and grow in confidence. Staff prioritise their wishes and feelings and actively involve them in decision-making. This has significantly increased their self-esteem.
- The value of education is strongly promoted by the staff team.
- Young person's safety is extremely well managed, resulting in a decrease in behaviours that place them at risk of harm. They are very well educated about managing the risks that are pertinent to them.
- Highly effective care planning and partnership working ensure that young people continue to make improvements in all areas of their lives.
- Excellent partnership working with specialist health services, including child and adolescent mental health services and drug and alcohol services is consistently improving the young people's emotional health, behaviour and resilience.
- Young people have benefited from a stable, qualified and experienced staff team. This has enabled them to develop trusting and respectful relationships.
- The exceptional commitment shown by the registered manager and staff team ensures that young people feel highly valued. The registered manager strives to achieve the highest standards for young people in her care.
- The registered manager and staff are ambitious and have high aspirations for young people and show tenacity in helping them achieve their individual goals.
- Young people have made significant progress in all areas of their lives, from living in a well-maintained, stable, safe and caring home environment.

The children's home's areas for development

- All staff should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording.
- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
15/06/2016	Full	Inadequate

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

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for all young people. Consequently, in taking into account young people's starting points, all are making exceptional progress in areas of their development, including emotional well-being, behaviours and health.

Staff consistently deliver exceptionally personalised care plans and intervention programmes that encourage young people to thrive in all areas of their development. Staff are extremely motivated and have high aspirations for young people. Promoting positive outcomes is central to the work and ethos of the home. One young person said, 'This is the best place I have ever lived. At first, I did not like the changes the new manager was making, but it really has made everything much better. I feel listened to, safe and really happy.'

Transitions into and out of the home are carefully considered and individualised. One young person informed the inspector that the welcome book she received was helpful. She said, 'I was able to have a read on my own and then staff checked I understood everything.' Managers provide opportunities for new young people to visit the home in advance of moving in, whenever possible. This enables young people to have a look around the home and meet staff and other young people. Staff do their best to make young people feel welcome and help them to personalise their rooms. One young person was pleased that she had an opportunity to decorate her room and pick new wallpaper and bedding. This enables young people to start to settle and begin to build up relationships with the staff caring for them.

Consultation with young people is exceptional in all aspects of their care. Staff undertake regular and effective one-to-one key-working sessions with young people. These are

very detailed, and address a range of topics relevant to the individual young person, including their overall progress and experiences. This includes risks in the community, drug and alcohol misuse, internet safety and education. One young person said, 'They (the staff) explain why they are worried and what we need to think about when out with friends or using the internet. [Deputy managers name] is great at explaining things. He never shouts and I can talk to him about anything and he will listen and help.'

Appropriately trained and experienced staff have a clear understanding of young people's health needs. Emotional health is promoted exceptionally well in this home. This is down to excellent joint working with specialist therapeutic services, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), Addaction and specialist bereavement services. CAMHS provide direct support to young people to enable them to deal more effectively with difficult emotions and trauma. Furthermore, they provide regular training sessions to staff. This enables staff to evaluate their practice and explore new research and developments in specific areas, such as child development. Young people therefore benefit from improved emotional health because they receive consistent support from a committed and knowledgeable team.

Most young people have made exceptional progress in their education placements since moving to the home. One young person recently received an outstanding award from school for 'the best achievement in arts.' Other young people have successfully returned to school placements and value the support made available to them. For example, one young person said, 'I was dreading going back to school, but actually it has been OK. I'm making new friends and I want to do well and get qualifications to get a good job, and a nice home.' However, one young person continues to struggle to access a full-time education programme. Managers and staff continue to be creative and work closely with all education professionals to closely monitor the current education programme and identify strategies to increase the number of hours of tutoring and extra-curricular activities. Staff continually reinforce the importance of education to all young people and follow individual plans. Young people have responded well to the support made available to them, and this improves their life chances. However, young people no longer have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning in the home. The registered manager has continually raised this with the provider and has a clear understanding of why this benefits young people in their learning.

Staff have successfully fostered secure, trusting relationships with young people. One young person's comment clearly demonstrated this: '[Staff member's name] gives the best hugs in the world. She helps me feel safe and calm.' Staff know young people extremely well and are genuinely interested in all that they do. One young person has shown an exceptional talent in art. Staff have celebrated the young person's achievements and have taken the time to frame her artwork, which is proudly on display throughout the home. The provider has also included this artwork on some of the children looked after documentation. Staff also spend individual time with young people to find out about their interests and hobbies. They have taken young people to try new activities, which have included cadets, athletics and youth clubs. One young person said, 'I wanted to try athletics so [Staff member's name] found a local club for me and I went along. Although I went a few times, it is not really for me. Staff were OK about that and

said they were pleased that I at least had a go.' Young people were extremely positive about the support they receive, which in turn increases their confidence, self-worth and resilience.

Staff continually prepare and support young people to develop their independence skills. Young people participate in general household tasks, such as cleaning their bedrooms, laundry tasks, food preparation and shopping. They have also helped staff to decorate their bedrooms, learning new skills like painting and decorating. This contributes to a sense of ownership, and damage within the home does not occur. In addition, young people learn the skills and develop the confidence they will need to assist with a smooth transition into independence in the future.

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

Safeguarding is a priority of all staff working at the home and is central to their practice. Staff have a clear knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in protecting young people, and this continues to be on the agenda in team meetings and supervision. Furthermore, managers and staff have maintained effective relationships with the local police, social workers, schools and health professionals. This well-established professional network means that young people receive high levels of support, reflecting their needs and vulnerabilities.

Staff carry out meaningful and creative work with young people, individually and in groups. Staff readily talk to young people about relevant issues and young people engage well. As a result, they understand more about issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, e-safety, extremism, grooming and child sexual exploitation. Staff give key messages to young people about the need to tell someone if they are worried or scared, and to ask for help. Young people become more aware of the risks involved and what they can do to keep themselves safe. This builds resilience and equips young people to deal with risky or difficult situations that they may encounter.

The staff ensure that comprehensive risk assessments and safety plans are in place for all young people. They effectively balance the need for protection with enabling young people to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. They involve young people in devising the plans and encourage young people to let them know how best to help them feel safe. For example, staff have completed direct work to help young people to understand what action they will take if they fail to return home at night, or return under the influence of any substances. This includes staff actively looking for young people when they are late home, in addition to continually ringing them and contacting their families and friends. Furthermore, when young people return under the influence of a substance, staff are clear about their role to continuously monitor the young person and seek medical advice if required. Young people understand why staff are taking the actions required to keep them safe. In addition, staff have supported young people to access the support of other specialist health advisers to ensure that young people fully understand the risks they are placing themselves at. This robust safeguarding practice is ensuring that risks are effectively managed and minimised.

Incidents of missing from care have reduced for all young people. All staff are fully aware of what action is required if a young person fails to return home. They go to great lengths to locate young people and facilitate their safe return. Staff keep relevant people informed, and work together well with families, friends and the police. Parents confirmed the extra lengths that they feel staff go to protect their children. One parent said, 'They (staff) are clear why they are ringing and they will continue to ring until [Young person's name] goes back home. I believe they are 100% protecting my child.' Collaborative working keeps young people safe from harm. When young people return, they have the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home about what happened when they were away. This information informs risk management plans.

Staff manage behaviour through good, clear communication, which includes negotiation, compromise and flexibility. This has resulted in no punitive behaviour management, such as physical interventions, since the last inspection. This results in a home where praise is fundamental and consequences are rare. Furthermore, the episodes of going missing have greatly reduced, and young people were very clear that they feel 'safe', 'happy' and have staff they can talk to if they are worried or upset.

Managers ensure that they follow safer recruitment and selection processes. This prevents unsuitable people from having access to vulnerable young people. Thorough induction programmes ensure that staff are equipped to care safely for young people. One staff member said, 'I welcomed the induction process. I had the opportunity to shadow staff and look at procedures and policies before working on my own. The managers have continued to check I am OK and are quick to answer any questions, while continuing to be supportive. I really love working here.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the management at the home. The provider successfully recruited a new manager and she registered with HMCI in February 2017. She has a wealth of experience in residential childcare and is suitably qualified. Since moving to the home, she has consistently provided visionary and enabling leadership to a staff team that is now stable and committed. Staff respond enthusiastically to her expectation that they will deliver outstanding care to complex and vulnerable young people. Both staff and other professionals were extremely complimentary about the difference that the new manager has made. Consequently, young people benefit from a placement that fully supports their emotional, safety and learning needs, and helps them to progress in leaps and bounds. Staff recognise and celebrate the efforts of young people to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world and their interaction with it.

An enthusiastic and committed deputy manager supports the registered manager. Together with staff, they are all clearly child focused and passionate about what they do. Because of the outstanding care and support that young people receive, they thrive and make excellent progress quickly. Managers diligently monitor young people's progress, and this means that young people receive care in line with their relevant plans. A young

person said, '[Manager's name] has really made a big difference to this home. She asks what we think and I know she only wants the best for us all.'

In recent months, external monitoring systems have significantly improved. This means that external oversight is now more effective and rigorous. The manager is keen to develop this further and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. Staff assess and record the progress made by young people against their placement plans. However, not all staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. The registered manager recognises that this as an area for improvement. She has planned individual discussions with staff about the importance of recording. This will ensure that when young people access their records they provide a factual account of their journey thorough care.

When young people experience barriers to success, staff's natural can-do attitude and excellent analysis of the difficulty help them to overcome those barriers. For example, when families have difficulty relating to professionals, the home offers a different opportunity for them to work with their child's plans. This approach works because the registered manager and deputy manager have a clear understanding of the scope of their responsibility to support the placing authority's plan for the young person. They also continually challenge the local authority if there are any delays or drift in planning, which are having an adverse impact on young people. For example, two young people had not received a copy of their pathway plans. Managers have challenged the social work team about the delays and stressed the importance of young people having access to important legal documents. This ensures that young people have access to all documentation and promotes working together to improve outcomes for young people

Staff benefit from regular and developmental supervision. They said that this helps them to reflect on their performance and ensures that they continually improve the quality of care they provide. The registered manager works with the provider to identify training and development needs for the team and this is reflected in the development plan for the home. She is aspirational for staff's and young people's development and continually reviews changes in legislation to ensure that they are aware of any changes and of the impact on the home. For example, discussions have taken place with staff about what is a deprivation of liberty and, in practice, what that means for staff caring for young people. Furthermore, she has arranged for guest speakers to attend team meetings to ensure that all staff are fully aware of other factors that may affect practice. Consequently, staff approach their work with young people with increased knowledge and understanding about the background to their work. This helps them to be confident in the way they support young people and work with other professionals to achieve continuing progress.

Strong and effective leadership and clear monitoring systems are in place to continually review the quality of care provided and improve outcomes for young people. Staff report that they are 'extremely well supported' in their roles and have regular team meetings and supervision sessions. This enables them to reflect on their practices and highlight any areas of training or development. All staff commented on the commitment and

support of both managers at the home, and one staff member said, 'Both managers are extremely supportive. They continually get us to think about the support we provide to all young people. Is it the best it can be and the young people are making progress and most important they are happy and safe.'

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 whom 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: 1183574

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: 58 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NP

Responsible individual: Sophie Wales

Registered manager: Genevieve Raw

Inspector

Michelle Edge, social care regulatory inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding 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 1231, 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 <http://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 <http://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017