

SC423753

Registered provider: Ruskin Mill Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable trust and is part of a specialist school. It is registered for five young people who live in the home on either a full-time or shared-care basis. It caters for the care and educational needs of young people who have a broad range of learning, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 July 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 13 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because

- Young people make exceptional progress from their starting points in all areas of their lives.
- Through living at the home, young people's life chances and outcomes are significantly improved.
- The care that young people receive is informed through a strong research-based approach.
- Young people have trusting relationships with staff. This has enabled them to share their difficulties and get the help that they need.
- The staff communicate very well with professionals and family members.

The children's home's areas for development

- The registered manager needs to receive supervision to ensure that there is oversight of her practice and development.
- Although the staff fully understand the vulnerabilities and potential risks in respect of the young people, they need to deepen their understanding of the risks posed by others in the local community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
02/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/08/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- The statement of purpose is of particular importance to this standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a "Statement of Purpose" (regulation 16 and schedule 1). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5). With particular reference to including staff details in the statement of purpose.
- Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1). This is with particular reference to the location risk assessment providing insight into risks within the local community and the impact and management of these.
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people are making significant progress by living at the home. They are being helped by committed and knowledgeable staff, who respond quickly and sensitively to the highly complex needs of the young people. As a result, their outcomes are greatly improving, with small but significant changes for the young people concerned. For example, one young person is now sleeping on a mattress with bedding, where previously she would routinely sleep on the floor with blankets. Her parent reported: 'In the last year the staff have done wonders for my child. There is nothing that I would change.'

Young people get exceptional support in relation to their identity. The ethos of the Trust is an acceptance of difference, and as a direct result, one young person has felt able to discuss their feelings about their gender identity. This young person is receiving specialist support coordinated by the home's manager to provide continuous help and guidance through their evolving needs. This is a remarkable piece of work to support this young person, which has had a significant impact upon other areas of their life.

Young people receive continuous positive messages about themselves from all the staff. They are highly supported to regulate their emotions, and their well-being is improving by the therapeutic techniques and specialist support that is in place. Staff are quick to recognise the changes in the young people's behaviours and mood. This means that young people instantly gain the required medical or therapeutic help they need to meet their presenting needs. This includes helping one young person to promptly visit the doctor to discuss his anxieties, as this was having an impact upon his mental health. Another young person is also using meditation videos to help maintain his focus and remain calm. This is of benefit generally, but particularly at school.

Young people make excellent progress in education. The Trust's education programmes promote engagement and help young people to achieve their further education plans. Young people also make tremendous progress on their skills towards independence. Again, for young people with highly complex needs, this represents a significant development. For example, one young person is regularly cooking healthy meals, while another young person is routinely completing their laundry.

Young people gain hugely from the excellent support they receive to help them to develop their social skills and an understanding of how others feel. This includes spending time socialising with others and learning about the 'give and take' of friendships. One parent reported: 'My son's social skills have improved. He is much better than before. He has friends now, which he previously never had, and although this is still a struggle, having friends is major boost.'

Young people enjoy very healthy lifestyles. The staff embrace the ethos of the Trust that healthy lifestyle choices have a positive impact on well-being. Young people enjoy the shared-eating programme, which includes eating organic food. In addition, exercise and physical activity are encouraged, and this is having a positive impact on young people being able to regulate their weight. Young people are also supported to take responsibility for their own health needs, with real success. For example, one young person has now agreed to have a vaccination administered, after years of refusing to do so.

Young people are supported to understand their transition plans from the home, in a way that is sensitive to their highly complex needs. When young people are experiencing delay with their move to independence, the manager is doing the right thing for them by ensuring that they maintain the stability and security of the home until the required accommodation provision is secured. The manager tirelessly advocates for the young people to address unnecessary drift or delay on transition plans.

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

Young people are protected by a staff team which is knowledgeable and able to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Individual risks and vulnerabilities, particularly as they relate to young people with highly complex needs, are clearly understood by staff and are routinely considered to ensure the young people's safety.

Risk assessments are detailed and thorough. Young people contribute to these assessments and are helped to understand and recognise risks through communication means that they clearly understand, including visual aids. These strategies are highly effective. For example, one young person has now not self-harmed for a number of months. Their parent reported: 'When my child self-harmed, staff informed me really quickly and we talked together with X to create a clear plan to move forward.' Another vulnerable young person was helped by staff to understand the impact of his decision to have a mobile phone, although this caused him anxieties. Staff discussed this with the young person who was supported to return the phone. A parent reported: 'Staff are really supportive to all the family. They have been helping me and X as he previously had been in a lot of trouble by having a mobile phone.'

As young people reach the age of 18 years, potential risks associated with becoming an adult are explored with them. For example, staff had a clear discussion with a young person about alcohol consumption, prior to a celebration meal at a restaurant.

Young people have long-standing, trusting relationships with staff and as risks are reducing and behaviours improving, young people are building upon their independence within the community. For example, one young person is now able to go to a climbing activity once a week independently, where previously she was always supervised by staff. Another young person can now safely travel alone to a local shopping centre. One young person identifies that she is happy at the home and because they have helped her with her behaviours, things are also better at her family home. Her social worker reported: 'Prior to being placed at the home, X had very challenging behaviours and was violent to her sibling. Since she has been in placement her behaviours have come a long way, she can open up and reflect, to stop boiling up.' Although the staff fully understand the vulnerabilities and potential risks in respect of the young people, they need to expand the detail within the location risk assessment to explore the potential risks posed by others within the local community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has a wealth of experience and is a highly effective manager. She is described by her team as a 'strong leader'. She leads a committed and enthusiastic staff team and the ethos within the home is strong.

The manager leads by example and her presence is very much felt within the home. She has an individual relationship with each young person and is very knowledgeable of their progress. She is remarkably influential with her role and truly passionate about the needs of the young people. She advocates strongly for them to ensure that their current and future needs are routinely met.

There is a strong learning culture within the home and the team embraces this to give the young people the best possible support. In addition, the team reviews the need for future learning and development. For example, it is developing its knowledge based on the themes identified in potential referrals to the home. All staff activities and development focus upon the young people's needs, ensuring that they receive high

levels of care in all aspects of their lives.

The manager has highly effective oversight of staff practice and is aware of the areas for further development, which will continue to benefit the young people who live in the home. However, although the registered manager clearly reviews the needs of the home, she would benefit from receiving supervision to ensure that there is proper oversight of her practice and development.

Partnership working is effective and there is regular consultation with parents, carers and professionals. At times the staff have faced challenges and barriers to communication. However, the staff are proactive at finding ways of working together to support the needs of the young people. One social worker reported: 'Staff have been very helpful and helped me to get to know X and how to communicate with her. This really helped, and I sent through pictures and other information about myself that X was really responsive to. This is because of the work the staff did.'

The home clearly fulfils the objectives in its statement of purpose. However, this document does not contain full details about the staff team. This shortfall has no impact on young people, but would help to inform parents and others about the skills and experience of the staff team.

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: SC423753

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Ruskin Mill Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Ruskin Mill, Mill Bottom, Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire GL6 0LA

Responsible individual: Constantin Court

Registered manager: Debra Dawson

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, social care inspector

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