

SC062079

Registered provider: The Children's Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is linked to the on-site non-maintained school. It provides residential care for children who have multiple disabilities and/or complex health needs. The school provides 52-week placements for learners and is, therefore, registered as a children's home. The registered children's home accommodates up to 33 young people, in single or twin bedrooms. The residential accommodation comprises three separate houses. At the time of this inspection, there were 24 residential children. The site is also registered with CQC.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 October 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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 20 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Through the relationships formed with staff, children are relaxed and feel safe, and parents confirm this.
- The atmosphere in the home is nurturing and welcoming. There is now less of a clinical feel, and it is more homely.
- Achievements and memories are now captured. These are celebrated and shared with pride by the staff teams.
- The management team is striving for continued improvement and is now much more aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the home.
- Staff are knowledgeable about children's needs and in tune with their feelings. This enables any health concerns to be acted on promptly and in a dignified manner.
- The activities provided increase stimulation and enable children to interact socially.
- All professionals on site work together to ensure that children's needs are met.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Audits of staff recruitment files have yet to be fully completed. Gaps are still identified, and this audit needs to continue until fully completed.
- Verbal complaints are not recorded to enable actions arising to be identified and taken.
- Staff supervisions do not enable reflection or provide for an opportunity to discuss the children that the staff care for.
- Prospective staff are not provided with sufficient information in relation to the complex nature of the role applied for.
- Not all the staff have completed the necessary qualification within the required timescales.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
15/06/2016	Monitoring	
25/01/2016	Full	Good

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
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>(2) The registered person may only—</p> <p>(a) employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>(b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>(3) The requirements are that—</p> <p>(a) the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>(b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>(c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>(d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. This is with specific reference to the following points in the regulation.</p> <p>(4) An individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>(a) the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare or—</p> <p>(b) a qualification which the registered person considers to be the equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma</p> <p>(5) the relevant date is—</p> <p>(a) in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home</p> <p>(b) in the case of an individual who was working in a care role</p>	<p>30/11/2017</p>

in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))(4(a)(b)5(a)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	30/11/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39(3))	30/11/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1) In particular, ensure that prospective staff are given adequate information about the work involved.
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- Both the arrangements for contact and any contact details (telephone numbers etc.) must be included in the child's placement plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.15) In particular, ensure that they are correct.
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3) In particular, ensure that night time checks are consistently carried out and recorded in line with children's risk assessments.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The aim of each of the three houses which comprise this children's home is for each child to 'have the opportunity to live, and learn in a safe, caring and nurturing environment where their differences are acknowledged, their abilities recognised and the importance of optimising health is valued'. This aim was clearly seen in the approach staff took in caring for each of the children. Staff were seen to possess a warmth in how they supported children and ensured that the children have the best possible experiences. Relationships between staff and children are of a good quality, with staff taking time to develop these attachments and understand each child. Since the last inspection, the atmosphere in the homes is seen to be calmer. A holistic approach to meeting the children's health needs was seen, as well as a recognition in the need to

meet each child's social needs.

Staff work with parents and carers to promote meaningful contact. This is child centred and enables relationships and contact to be both sustained and enjoyable. Families that visit from far away may have the use of the parent accommodation. This enables them to spend quality time with their child. There is an 'anytime policy' for parents to visit, and staff understand the importance of these relationships. The more frequent use of technology has also enabled regular contact to be maintained. It was noted during the inspection that the contact information for families and social workers was not up to date. The out-of-date information may inhibit staff from contacting the necessary people quickly.

Progress, memories and achievements are now being recorded with the use of 'golden moments' and scrap books. Each child's achievements are proudly displayed. There are varying examples of how children progress given their life-limiting conditions and individual vulnerabilities. Each achievement is celebrated. Support to manage children's life-long healthcare conditions was evident. Specialist help is always available with the use of therapeutic programmes, and all the staff teams across the site work together to ensure that this is integrated into children's 24-hour support plans. Staff complete regular checks of children day and night; however, night time checks are not routinely recorded.

The activities and experiences on offer are developing each child's quality of life through stimulation and new challenges. Children are supported to engage in faith-based activities; their cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs are actively supported. Staff have researched certain areas to ensure that children and their family's beliefs are met. Staff have then shared their knowledge with others.

Staff are consistently ensuring that children's views and needs are met through observations and communication with them. The organisation has now employed an advocate. Through this, and the use of speech and language support, staff try and gain the views of children. Each child has a communication passport in operation and this, alongside the 24-hour monitoring charts, details practical information to enable staff to be clear on indicators of each child's feelings.

Transitions are managed well and in an individualised way, with key staff moving with young people when internal transfers take place. This ensures that attachments are maintained and children are prepared for the moves.

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

Children's safety is given the highest priority. Staff act promptly to any concerns and report them to the necessary professionals. Children's risks and vulnerabilities are clearly understood by staff. There are a range of risk assessments in place which demonstrate that staff are aware of the risks to children with very complex needs. Staff were able to describe the action to take if there was a concern.

Observations of children indicated that they felt relaxed in the presence of staff. Children are able to communicate through behaviours and presentation that they had preferences for certain staff. Staff are tuned into these cues and respond accordingly. Staff are very

aware when children may need additional support and this gives children and families a sense of reassurance. Parents spoken to felt that their children were safe and happy.

Investigations into any allegations of harm are fully investigated and the managers now have a system in place to ensure recommendations following internal investigations are taking place and what the impact of these actions have had. These are RAG (red, amber and green) rated to ensure that all actions are then followed up. This also takes place for incidents such as medication errors. Changes to practice have taken place as a result. Staff spoken to were confident in their safeguarding responsibilities and knew what to do if they had a concern. Children in placement are not at risk of going missing due to their very complex needs.

Currently, staff read the safeguarding policy as part of their induction. This includes explaining risk factors for children with disabilities. However, staff knowledge and awareness of PREVENT, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation are not underpinned by training.

The recruitment process and policy has been changed to comply with the children's homes regulations; this is an ongoing process and managers have completed audits of existing staff in phases. They have yet to complete audits of files for staff commencing work prior to April 2015. On sampling files, there are gaps in recruitment processes for staff that have been internally transferred to the children's homes. However, it is recognised that there has been a lot of work completed in this area. In addition, when there is a delay in obtaining overseas police checks, the policy has not been followed in one case and no risk assessment is in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The senior leadership team and house managers have implemented almost all of the requirements and recommendations made at the last full inspection. They have moved things forward at a fast pace and understand areas that they still need to develop. This has resulted in a less clinical atmosphere in the houses and a more homely and inclusive environment. There are photos now displayed of children having fun and staff reflect on the journey that they have all taken together. All staff spoken to felt that this progress has had a very positive impact in ensuring that they achieve the best for the children. Comments from parents included, 'They create a lovely, homely feel' and 'always welcoming, friendly and caring'.

A range of development plans are in place with clear oversight by managers. Managers are able to demonstrate where there is compliance and areas that they need to improve on. Effective and decisive action is then taken. The whole senior team has a high expectation of what it wants to achieve.

Staff report that they work well as a team and are well supported. One staff member described how, 'Everyone works together and the treatment of children, including all the professionals involved, makes a big difference to the lives of the children here.' There are a range of professionals on site that work together in a holistic way to ensure that all the needs of children are met. There are new three-monthly reviews being trialled which consider all the child's areas of support, and whether further developments are required.

This enables managers to understand the progress children make.

New staff undergo an induction period which develops their understanding of the needs of children with disabilities. However, information at the interview stage on children with very complex needs is limited. Staff report that they didn't feel they had the information available at this early stage, or fully understand the emotional impact the work may have. Staff now have more regular supervision. There is, however, a lack of clarity and understanding of the difference between training, including acquisition of competencies and skills and reflective supervision. The records seen do not consider the aims of supervision as highlighted within the supervision contract. There is no reflection on practice, the emotional impact of working here, or the needs of children assigned to the staff's care.

The home is staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the children. There has been a fairly high turnover of staff in the home. A review of exit interviews is taking place and managers are using this information to aid in the retention of staff. Managers are also using staff questionnaires to enable them to look at any trends and, if necessary, adapt practice and processes.

There have been a low number of complaints recorded. Written complaints received have been considered and action then taken. When verbal complaints are received, these are not documented. This does not enable any trends to be identified and demonstrate the outcome of these concerns and complaints, and if any further work is required.

Staff undertake regular training which provides them with the necessary knowledge and competencies to fulfil their role. The management team is ensuring that staff are working towards the required qualification. There remains a number of staff who have not completed this within the required time frame. There are now clear action plans in place to review progress, but this previous requirement is not yet met.

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 differences 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: SC062079

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The Children's Trust

Responsible individual: Margaret Clancy

Registered manager: Helena D'Angelo

Inspector

Emeline Evans, social care inspector

Amanda Maxwell, social care inspector

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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>

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