

1253975

Registered provider: Oaktree Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private company has one children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Not applicable.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The home has a strong ethos of care, support and reflection. Staff establish good relationships with young people, their families and professionals and pride themselves on being able to deliver the best possible care for young people.
- Young people make good progress living here.
- Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff.
- Young people feel safe. They share their concerns and worries with staff who respond in a caring and sensitive way.
- Young people receive support to access specialist services that meet their identified needs.
- A consistent, nurturing and motivated staff team supports young people to learn to manage their own risk-taking behaviours and make safer choices.
- Staff know the young people well. They support and encourage them to develop individual interests and hobbies.
- Staff work well with other agencies and communication is very good. Other agencies are positive about the home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- When young people are not engaged in education, their daily routine does not match that of a school day.
- Risk assessments and plans are not always clear.
- Some staff have not received training in the areas of practice that are relevant to the young people's needs and risks.
- The internal quality assurance system is not robust enough.
- Recording is not always accurate and clear.

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

Recommendations

- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment and resources for learning ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18). In particular, ensure that each child receives an educational daily routine and has access to educational resources during the school day if they are not accessing full-time education.
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and make sure that the plans in place to manage these risks are clear. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff access training that is relevant to the young people's needs and risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should develop and implement an internal quality assurance monitoring and reviewing system to ensure that practice is consistently good and ensure the continuous improvement of practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.54)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. 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). Specifically, that records contain accurate and sufficient detail that is not ambiguous.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home was registered in June 2017. This is the first full inspection.

Young people make good progress and they speak positively about living here. One young person said that they 'really like it here, it is like home'. They talk about how they feel better and say that they are now not hanging around on the streets and getting into trouble. Parents and professionals report that they are very happy with the care and support offered to the young people. One parent explained that their child is doing much better now they are living at the home and went on to say that their child looks much healthier and has better daily routines. Furthermore, a social worker said that the young

person had invaluable support from the staff, and that they had been influential in the young person's positive progress. They said that this had been due to the positive reinforcement that the young person had received while living here.

The home is welcoming. The atmosphere is calm and nurturing. It is reflective of the young people living here. Young people are encouraged to personalise their home and they display pictures of their friends and of themselves undertaking activities with staff. Recent incidents have resulted in some damage to the home. The home ensures that any damage is repaired in a timely way.

Young people have positive and trusting relationships with staff. This enables young people to feel safe. Consequently, they are honest about their wishes and feelings, and share their concerns and worries. Staff are supportive and proactive, and act in a sensitive and reassuring way on any information shared.

Young people receive individual care that reflects their needs and risks. However, staff do not identify all known risks. Consequently, they do not form part of the assessments and plans, and patterns of behaviour continue. When staff know the risks, young people receive good help, support and guidance. This enables young people to make safer decisions. Staff work proactively with young people, their families and the relevant agencies to reduce risk. For example, missing from home was a key risk indicator for young people when they arrived. This risk has reduced considerably.

Young people receive support to access specialist services that meet their identified needs. Staff are proactive in seeking advice and guidance from other professionals. This partnership working provides young people with the holistic care that they need. It also allows good professional relationships to develop between agencies. Young people benefit from this approach and subsequently risk-taking behaviours reduce.

When young people first arrive at the home, they are not engaged in education. Staff take a proactive approach to securing education that meets young people's needs. They work together with the local authority to ensure that young people have access to the correct educational placements, at the earliest opportunity. When young people do access education, they engage well and attendance is good. However, when young people are not engaged in education their daily routine does not match that of a school day. Consequently, young people are not engaged in meaningful and focused educational activities.

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop independent skills. They are empowered to take a lead in their life and learn how choices can have an impact on their future. However, on occasion, staff do not explore key areas of concern with young people and thus young people do not always receive the information they need to make safe decisions. For example, young people will learn about safe sex and relationships, but they do not learn about the legal implications of having sexual relationships.

Young people are involved in the running of the home. There are regular and meaningful young people's meetings. Young people and staff are encouraged to use each meeting as a time to reflect on and explore issues and celebrate achievements. Young people are actively involved in developing the weekly menus and their weekly activity schedules.

Young people are encouraged to take part in a range of activities. Staff know the young people well and arrange activities that young people will enjoy. In addition to this, the

activities provide learning opportunities. When it is difficult to find the activities that young people want to do, staff are proactive and explore the community to find something that will meet the young person's wishes. For example, a young person wanted to train with weights at a gym. However, due to their age, it was proving difficult to find a gym that would let them do this. Staff worked together with the young person's parent, and were able to find a gym that would allow this to happen with the consent of the parent.

Young people have regular contact with their families. They speak positively about this. Staff support and encourage the relationships between young people and their families. When contact arrangements are not working well, staff are able to review these with the social worker and revise them accordingly.

Staff promote the achievements that young people make. Staff capture the progress in a thorough and informative report. Parents and social workers receive regular updates on young people's progress. They speak very positively about this. One parent said, '[Name of the home] keep me well informed. I feel I know what is going on. I am part of decisions and I am happy with the placement.'

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

Young people are safe and they know that staff care about them. Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach. Young people respond well to this. They spend meaningful time with staff and they say that they enjoy the staff's company. Young people have the time and space to explore their wishes and feelings. They benefit from focused and regular key-work sessions and conversations. Staff complete these to a very good standard. This is a key strength of the home. The sessions are reflective in nature and young people receive help with learning and understanding their needs and their risk-taking behaviours. Young people are benefiting from this work and this is evident in the reduction in risk-taking behaviour and the positive progress that they make.

Young people's placement plans are of a good standard and easy to follow. Information is clear and the documents are easy to navigate. They are young-person focused and the reader has a good insight into the young person's journey. Risk assessments and plans are good. However, some key risk factors are missing and thus plans are not robust enough. Furthermore, on occasion, staff do not follow the agreed risk strategies. Consequently, young people take part in avoidable risk-taking behaviour. Staff work well with other agencies to assess and manage risk. They take the lead from specialist professionals and ensure that young people and the community are safe from harm. The monitoring of young people's needs and the progress young people make is good. Nonetheless, the monitoring of risk is not as effective. As a result, staff overlook some trends and triggers regarding young people's risk-taking behaviours.

Staff manage safeguarding concerns effectively. They follow procedures well and ensure that all relevant people have the required information in a timely way. In addition, they follow advice and guidance from other professionals and agencies, and ensure that the young people and staff are safe. They provide good support to the young people and show empathy and understanding. This gives young people the reassurance they need to feel safe and supported.

Staff and young people are clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable.

Young people receive support to take responsibility for their own behaviour and respect the boundaries that are in place. Sanctions are restorative in nature and have the desired outcome. When young people display unacceptable behaviour, staff respond quickly and use de-escalation techniques to defuse the situations. On occasion, staff use physical interventions to defuse and manage incidents. In these instances, staff follow clear policies and procedures and use the accredited techniques that they have received training in. Staff record incidents well. Young people receive follow-up debriefs and key-work sessions to allow them time to reflect on the incident. Staff also have debriefs from a senior person who was not involved in the incident.

The recruitment and selection of staff is sufficiently robust. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify each visitor's identity to protect young people. Health and safety checks are completed and this ensures a safe living environment. The community risk assessment is sufficiently robust and takes into account recent neighbourhood incidents.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities with regard to keeping young people safe. Staffing levels are very good. This allows young people to have access to good levels of support that are in line with their individual assessments. This ensures that young people have the required safeguards in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leadership and management are good. The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and she leads by example. She has an inclusive, nurturing and caring approach. Her expectations about the standard of practice required are clear and staff respond well to this. The relationships between the registered manager and staff are positive. A deputy manager and two senior members of staff support the registered manager to run the home effectively. This is in line with the aims and ethos of the statement of purpose. Staff are suitably qualified or working towards this. The members of the recently formed staff team work well together, and provide a consistent approach to the care they provide for the young people.

The home has a strong ethos of care, support and reflection. Staff establish good relationships with young people, their families and professionals, and pride themselves on being able to deliver the best possible care for young people. Staff receive good supervision and support. They are encouraged to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. A good variety of staff training is available and the training matrix is clear. However, not all staff have received the training required to understand young people's specific needs and risks, for example emotional, mental health and behaviour disorders. In this instance, more senior and experienced members of staff take the lead in working with young people, and support and develop staff accordingly.

Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people. Staff work effectively together to ensure that young people receive consistently positive messages. Young people are evidently responding well to this. One social worker said that one young person responded well to the positive messages and started to use the strategies they had been learning to self-regulate their behaviours. She went on to say that this was 'amazing', and that the improvement in the young person was almost immediate.

The external monitoring of the home is effective. The staff are considering the advice offered, and making changes accordingly. This is supporting the development of the home. Although internal monitoring of the home is in place, this does not always identify gaps in practice and areas for staff development. Furthermore, oversight is not always robust enough and poor decision-making goes unnoticed.

Liaison with other agencies is excellent. Professionals speak very positively about staff communication and partnership working. They receive regular updates on the progress young people are making. In addition, staff share any incidents in a timely way. Agencies value the home and the positive changes that young people make. They describe staff as child focused. One social worker said that it is an 'excellent placement', and that, even though the young person has now left, staff are still offering the support that the young person needs as they make their transition.

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: 1253975

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oaktree Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Ground Floor, Seneca House, Links Point, Amy Johnson Way, Blackpool FY4 2FF

Responsible individual: Geoffrey Bond

Registered manager: Barbara Newton

Inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker: social care inspector

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