

1213828

Registered provider: Inspire Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

Inspection date: 2 November 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: 13 January 2017

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:

- Young people live in a friendly, supportive and comfortable family home. They receive personalised care and support that consistently meets their assessed needs. When young people experience difficulties, the manager and staff make every effort to understand the situation and take action to make sure that young people are safe and get the right support to help them.
- The manager and staff have well-established partnerships with young people's social workers and the other people and professionals in the wider support network. They share information and work effectively to identify, understand and manage risks, and to take appropriate action to protect young people from harm.
- Young people have built positive relationships with the warm, caring and supportive staff. Even when there are difficulties, young people know that staff care about them and that they want them to be safe and happy.
- The manager and staff have the right personal qualities, experience, knowledge and skills to provide young people with a very good quality of care and support.
- The new manager provides clear and effective leadership and ensures that the home is managed in ways that promote young people's welfare and keeps them safe from harm.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Improve the external and internal monitoring, to give leaders and managers a thorough understanding of the quality of care provided and its impact on young people's lives, to ensure continuous improvement.
- Ensure that written risk assessments and plans clearly show the arrangements for checking on children's welfare and whereabouts when they spend time outside the home, and for safeguarding a child's immediate welfare when they return home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/05/2016	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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to understand the impact of the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(f)(h))</p> <p>This includes ensuring that the independent person’s monitoring and the internal review of the quality of care provide a detailed evaluation of the quality of care and childcare practice, the experiences of children living there and the impact that this is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Also, ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to understand their experiences, and to inform and support the continued improvement in the quality of care provided.</p>	<p>28/12/2017</p>

Recommendations

- When there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their risk assessment and plan must include in detail the steps staff will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5) This relates to the plans showing clearly and precisely the arrangements for checking on children’s welfare and whereabouts when they spend time outside the home, and for safeguarding a child’s immediate welfare when they return home or are suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a safe, friendly, supportive and comfortable family home. The manager and the staff provide young people with individualised care that meets their assessed needs and makes a positive difference to their lives. A social worker, 'The quality of care and support for the young person has been very good. He had a good relationship with staff. He was accepted and helped to manage his emotions. He was very settled; it's the only place where he has settled. They worked through problems with him.'

At the time of this inspection, only one young person was living at the home. Sadly, this young person was struggling to accept the help and support that is available to her. The manager and staff know the young person well, they understand her needs and circumstances, and the factors that are causing her difficulties. They are working effectively with her social worker and the rest of her wider support network to manage her level of vulnerability and work out the best way to help her. Her social worker said, 'Staff within the home, past and present, have gone above and beyond for the young person that I am working with, exhausting every possible avenue when she is missing, encouraging her interests and providing positive role-modelling where she had little from her family.'

The manager and staff treat young people with respect and enable them to express themselves as individuals. They listen to young people and encourage them to have suitable freedom and choice in relation to the day-to-day arrangements for their care. The young person makes decisions about the clothes she wears, the food she eats, and how she spends her spare time. She is supported and encouraged to go to important meetings about her life and to talk about her wishes. Staff balance the young person's wishes against what they judge to be in her best interests and always take suitable steps to protect her from harm. The manager and staff have continued to provide the young person with the warmth and reliability that is helping her to continue to have positive relationships with them, in spite of the difficult situation. Staff members' consistent and unconditional support is letting her know that staff care about her, want what is best for her, and want to help her be safe and happy. Her social worker said, 'It has not been an easy ride, but the staff have remained consistent and supportive. She appears happy there,' and, 'Their consistency and professionalism has been a contributing factor in the reduction in risk and vulnerability of this young person.'

The manager and staff have a good understanding of young people's individual assessed needs, and the arrangements for supporting them are consistent with their plan. Staff engage naturally with young people and provide them with a high quality of personalised support tailored to their assessed needs and what is happening in their lives. This includes support and advice around risk and personal safety, building positive relationships, managing feelings and behaviour, personal care and health needs, and taking part in education and activities. The staff show that they plan their work carefully, understand the issues they need to work on and how they will go about it. They

evaluate and reflect on the outcomes and impact of the work they do, to give them insight into the young person's life and how to provide them with effective support. They try different approaches to help young people to take part in the work, including using resources to explore feelings and think about personal safety, as well as talking through issues when driving in the car.

The manager and staff work actively and positively to help young people maintain and build meaningful relationships, in line with the local authority plan. They work sensitively with young people and their families to make suitable arrangements that meet young people's needs, to try to overcome any difficulties and rebuild relationships. They always make sure that seeing family is a safe and positive experience for young people.

The manager and staff provide structure, stability, encouragement, and opportunities for young people to take part in education and to learn and develop their knowledge, skills, and talents. Young people's participation in education has improved after moving into the home. A social worker said that the young person, 'Has made good progress. They got him into full-time education, his grades are fantastic and he now loves going to school.' Staff are clearly understanding of the barriers to learning and, like any good parent, they encourage and support young people's ambitions and fight for them to have the chance to learn and do well. Staff work extremely well with schools to support and improve young people's education opportunities. They give young people lots of opportunities to enjoy leisure time and develop their talents and interests, including going fishing, kayaking, horse riding, as well as going on holiday. Staff do their utmost to ensure that young people have every opportunity to take part in activities that they are interested in, for example working with animals. This is helping young people to gain confidence in their abilities, have fun, acquire new skills and improve their social and emotional skills.

Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific health needs and manage their health with sensitivity and confidence. They encourage young people to have a healthy diet and to get plenty of physical exercise. Staff closely monitor young people to make sure that they are physically and emotionally healthy. They ensure that young people always get suitable medical advice and treatment when they are feeling unwell or they are concerned about their emotional well-being. The arrangements for managing young people's medication are safe. Staff have suitable training and follow the appropriate procedures.

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

The manager and staff provide young people with a safe, friendly and reliable home environment. This is helping young people to feel settled and form positive relationships with staff. The young person said, 'I feel safe here. I don't need to talk to staff, but, if I really wanted to, I could.'

The manager and staff are skilled at identifying the signs that young people may be at risk of harm from abuse, neglect, bullying, social media, or sexual and criminal

exploitation. The manager and staff are vigilant and take prompt and effective action to deal with any concerns about the young people's safety, including alerting the multi-agency child sexual exploitation team. The manager and staff also have effective working relationships with schools, the police, health and young offending teams. Excellent communication with these key agencies is helping to meet young people's assessed needs and manage risks to their safety. The manager acted when he had concerns that the risks for certain young people were too high for them to continue living in the home safely. He also worked effectively with social workers and the police to determine how best to protect a young person who was going missing persistently and was at risk of exploitation.

The manager and staff help young people to understand the risks and dangers involved if they go missing from the home, and make sure that they know how to get help. They take reasonable precautions to check on young people's welfare when they are out. When young people go missing, staff always act quickly to try to find them by actively looking for them, making contact with their family and friends and informing the police and social workers. A social worker said that the manager and staff are 'good at sharing information about when the young person is missing from home, possible triggers, the context, and working out what is going on'. The manager and staff ensure that they get all the available information, including from taxi drivers, to help find the young person and to find out what happened to her while she was missing.

When a young person returns home, staff always provide them with a warm welcome, check to see if they need medical attention and get them something to eat and drink. Young people always have the opportunity to see an independent person to talk about what happened and the reasons for them not wanting to come home. This is usually the same person, and this means that young people have another trusted adult whom they can talk to when they are worried. The independent person said, 'The manager and staff do everything to ensure the young person is safe. The main issue is that she is linked to another young person who persistently goes missing. The reasons for going missing are not to do with where she is living: there is nothing lacking in the care she receives. She is happy here, very well supported.'

The manager and staff provide the young person with suitable advice and guidance around recognising risk and keeping herself and other people safe. Although she shows that she is aware of the risks, she is struggling to apply this to herself in real-time situations. Therefore, they are taking appropriate action to develop her insight. The staff are working hard to help her understand what makes a healthy and mutually supportive relationship and recognise when friends treat her badly. Staff are fully aware of the friendships that are having a negative influence on the young person. The manager and staff help young people to build friendships with other young people. The young people spend time with friends in the local community and visit their friends for tea, and staff encourage them to invite their friends to the home. The manager and staff have identified, and try to address, concerns about bullying. Staff provide young people with a lot of support about trying to understand the impact of their behaviour on other young people, especially around bullying and controlling behaviour.

Staff see beyond young people's presenting behaviour and clearly understand how young people's experiences may leave them feeling confused, rejected, anxious and angry. When young people have struggled to manage their feelings and control their behaviour, staff have handled the situation well. Their consistently calm and reasonable approach helps to take the heat out of the situation and avoids the need to use restraint. They are clearly developing a good understanding of the best ways to help each young person to manage their feelings and solve problems. They listen to young people to find out what helps them when they are feeling upset and allow them to use coping strategies that work for them: allowing one young person time to let her calm down by herself and think about what happened is helping her to manage her feelings safely.

Staff use restraint rarely and appropriately, and only when young people are at serious risk of harm. The managers monitor carefully the use of restraint to identify emerging patterns and to reflect on the best ways to support young people.

Behaviour and risk management plans are continuously reviewed and identify the changing needs of each young person. Plans are routinely updated following significant incidents and clearly show the current concerns about the young person. However, the plans do not always set out the precise steps for checking on young people's welfare and whereabouts when they spend time outside the home, and for safeguarding a young person's immediate welfare when they return home or are suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances. Nevertheless, staff showed a full understanding of young people's assessed needs and risks, and the arrangements for supporting them in these circumstances.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left the home on 16 October 2017. The deputy manager has been appointed to be the new manager. He has suitable residential childcare and management experience and the relevant qualifications to manage a children's home. He confirmed that he has started his application to Ofsted for registration. The new manager is showing clear management and effective leadership. His existing experience and knowledge of working in this children's home has been an advantage in providing continued stability and sustaining a high quality of care and support for the young person living there. The aspirations to make a meaningful difference to young people's lives and protecting them from harm are thoroughly embedded in the way that members of staff support them and in the running of the home.

The manager demonstrates a detailed understanding of young people's experiences and how well they are being supported to meet their assessed needs. He has a clear understanding of the progress that each young person is making and the priorities for their care. The manager and staff ensure that young people are cared for in line with their agreed plans. They are also quick to identify when young people are struggling and take the necessary action to make sure that they get the best possible help. This has included working with young people and their social workers to agree that it was in both young people's best interests for one of them to move to another children's home. The

manager made sure that the young person's move to his new home was sensitively arranged. The two members of staff with whom the young person had strong relationships have moved with him to his new home, to provide him with continuity of care. His social worker feels that the move was extremely well managed in the young person's best interests, which has meant that he has settled in quickly and continues to make pleasing progress.

The leaders and manager provide the right environment for staff to support young people with a high standard of care and consistency. The recent changes to the staffing structure, to take into account that only one young person is living in the home, have maintained a good continuity of care. The young person is still being looked after by people who she has positive relationships with, and who know her extremely well. The staffing arrangements ensure that the young person is always looked after by enough people who have the knowledge, qualifications, experience and skills to meet her assessed needs and promote her welfare. The members of staff clearly enjoy spending time with the young person and are keen to help her all they can. The manager and staff share information efficiently with each other so that everyone, including the young person, knows what is happening and what they need to do each day. This means that the young person has a clear and reliable daily routine.

The senior managers and manager provide each member of staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement. Staff have regular opportunities, through practice-related supervision and team meetings, to reflect on young people's progress, their own performance, the emotional impact of their work, to share skills, and develop their skills and knowledge. Members of staff have their performance and suitability to do their jobs formally reviewed at least every year. The new manager is suitably supervised and supported by a senior manager. He is also being mentored by an experienced registered manager to help him understand and develop his role. Senior managers support and encourage staff to develop expertise through good-quality training relevant to the needs of the young people, including child sexual exploitation, safeguarding, and behaviour management.

The independent monitoring of the home is not rigorous. It does not provide an in-depth assessment of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare or show the impact that the quality of care is having on the experiences of young people or their outcomes. The monitoring focuses on describing what has happened and evidencing that records are being kept, but it does not evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the support that young people are receiving. For example, it fails to consider sufficiently how relevant the behaviour management plans are to each young person's current needs and risks, and how effectively staff are using these plans to help the young person to manage their feelings and control their behaviour. Similarly, the manager's review of the quality of care does not reflect critically on the standard of support that young people receive and the differences that it is making to their lives. For example, the most recent review report stated that there is 'good use of positive and negative consequences', but did not reflect on what this means for the young person and the impact of promoting positive behaviour. Also, the review of the quality of care does not show young people's views on the support that they receive and how they feel

about living in the home. This insight into how young people experience the care that they receive is crucial in helping leaders and managers to understand the quality and impact of what they are doing. The lack of thorough and evaluative monitoring is limiting managers' understanding of the quality of the care in the home and their ability to identify and make further improvements.

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: 1213828

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Inspire Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 3, Craig Court, Standish Street, St. Helens, Merseyside WA10 1GJ

Responsible individual: Paul Keogh

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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