

1244426

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home provides short-term care and accommodation on a shared-care basis for a period of assessment.

Inspection date: 27 March 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 28 November 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

At the last inspection in November 2017, four requirements and six recommendations were made. The first requirement was regarding complaints and the children's guide. There have been no complaints by young people since the last inspection. The registered manager ensures that staff respond to any complaints appropriately. The registered manager has introduced a secure box in a communal area for young people to post any comments in private. In addition, a communication book is available and questionnaires are used to gain young people's feedback. The welcome booklet has been reviewed in consultation with young people. It is now easier to read and more user-friendly. This requirement has been met.

The second and fourth requirements relate to monitoring. The registered manager

utilises effective mechanisms to monitor the quality of care in the home. External monitoring visits take place on a monthly basis; any recommendations are addressed immediately. The registered manager values this external audit process. In addition, internal reviews of the home identify the strengths of the home and areas to improve. However, documents circulated to professionals have some sensitive information included, which does not protect young people's privacy. The requirements have been met but a recommendation has been made to address this last point.

The third requirement was to notify Ofsted about safeguarding issues relating to staff. Since the last inspection, the registered manager has informed Ofsted of any serious incidents in accordance with the regulations. This requirement has been met.

The first recommendation related to timely feedback to parents. Staff now update parents and carers on a weekly basis to inform them about their child's stay. In addition, questionnaires are used effectively to obtain the views of young people and those involved in their care. This recommendation has been met.

The second recommendation related to access to all communal areas. The restrictive practice of locking doors has been reviewed and is no longer used. This recommendation has been met.

The third recommendation was to ensure that staff discourage young people from smoking. A nurse has completed smoking cessation sessions with young people. Staff reinforce this message during key-work sessions and during discussions with young people. A more consistent approach is now evident. This recommendation has been met.

The fourth recommendation related to the anti-bullying agreement. This document has been reviewed in consultation with the young people and is now more appropriate and easily understood. This recommendation has been met.

The fifth recommendation concerned clear recording of risk assessments following safeguarding concerns. There have been no recent safeguarding concerns. One staffing issue is currently being investigated, and therefore was not reviewed at this inspection. This recommendation is untested.

The sixth recommendation related to supervision; the registered manager has addressed this shortfall and supervision is now held regularly, in line with the organisation's policy and is subject to internal quality assurance. This recommendation has been met.

Since the last inspection, five young people have moved in. The need for young people to access assessment and intervention work in a residential home was identified as part of staff's work in the community with them and their families. Staff were, therefore, familiar with the young people prior to them moving into the home. Impact risk assessments further equip staff with the necessary information to place young people for shared care on days that do not affect those who are already accessing the home.

Young people make good progress towards their agreed goals. They identify targets and

agree how these will be achieved. Staff work closely with young people and their families in the community, and strategies used can be transferred to the home environment. Young people who do not engage are given every opportunity to resolve matters. They continue to access support in the community if residential care is deemed to be no longer appropriate.

There is an ethos of recognising accomplishments. Staff praise young people and show genuine pride in their achievements. The views of young people are valued. They are consulted about how the service is run during house meetings, and requests are actioned or explanations given to them if it is not possible to act on their request. Young people spoken to report that they feel that staff listen to them.

Staff are effective in reducing risky behaviours; one young person has significantly reduced the number of times she is missing from the home. Her social worker said, 'She had 115 missing from home episodes prior to staying at the home; she now rarely goes missing.'

Staff are committed to helping young people to continue to reach their academic potential. They ensure that they are able to access their school placements while staying here. One young person had not attended school for some time prior to moving in, and he is now attending mainstream school full time.

Staff follow behaviour care plans to help them to manage young people's challenging behaviour and to reduce the necessity for physical interventions. Staff have helped young people to manage their behaviours better. The registered manager evaluates physical interventions records and discusses the methods used with the staff and young people involved. This ensures that staff can sufficiently address any potential risks posed through young people's interactions with each other.

Inter-agency working is strong. The manager works effectively with professionals involved in the young people's care. The registered manager liaises closely with professionals, welcoming feedback to ensure that they are meeting the young people's care plans. The service is in high demand: four new young people are currently being introduced to the service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Recommendations

- 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 risk 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 should include information gained from the local authority and local agencies.
- The registered person should consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4) Young people's personal information should be protected.

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: 1244426

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council,

Registered provider address: County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

Responsible individual: Daniel Ruaux

Registered manager: Sandra Curley

Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector

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