

# 1244426

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This 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.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 23 February 2017.

**Inspection date:** 6 December 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Date of last inspection:** 27 March 2018

**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 sustained effectiveness.

Young people are making good progress as a result of the strong relationships they have developed with staff. Staff spend significant amounts of quality time with young people, building trust and listening to them. These close relationships have enabled young people to build their self-confidence and they are beginning to express themselves more appropriately.

Trusting relationships between staff and young people have significantly reduced the necessity for physical intervention when young people become distressed or anxious. The nature of these relationships also ensures that young people have trusted adults who are able to listen to and support them. Young people were seen to approach staff

with ease.

Staff and managers have high aspirations for young people. They provide young people with creative and enjoyable activities and trips which serve as a vehicle for strengthening relationships between staff and young people. These activities also provide young people with memorable new experiences and broaden their outlook by highlighting the positive activities that are available to them.

Careful matching ensures that the needs of potential young people and those already living in the home can be fully met, ensuring the best possible outcomes for young people.

Staff respond appropriately when a young person is missing from care. Actions to be taken in such an event are detailed in each young person's care plan and the manager is diligent in ensuring that return to care interviews are carried out. Staff are familiar with local and organisational protocols, and liaise effectively with placing authority social workers if young people go missing.

Staff are vigilant in supervising and monitoring young people when they are together as a group or on their own in the home. This minimises opportunities for bullying.

The home is safe and secure, with the providers having due regard for issues of health and safety while maintaining a homely environment. Managers and staff lead by example and take care to support young people to understand the importance of health and safety. Appropriate checks are carried out robustly and shortfalls are addressed in a timely manner.

Young people are aware of how to make a complaint should they have any concerns about the quality of their care or their relationships with staff.

Records are not of the same high quality as other aspects of the service. Information is not easily retrieved and managers and staff had difficulty in accessing information during the inspection. Recording systems do not meet the needs of young people who may wish to access their records now or in the future'.

Staff recruitment practices are not well managed or robust. They do not have due regard for issues of safeguarding and detailed pre-employment checks are not undertaken.

The registered manager does not always notify or update the regulator in a timely way regarding significant or safeguarding matters. This impacts negatively on the ability of the regulator to effectively monitor the service provided.

Safeguarding training provided for staff and managers fails to consider all of the risks posed to young people. This leaves some young people vulnerable, as staff are unable to recognise the risks that are prevalent in their lives, and hence are unable to respond appropriately.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 27/03/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 28/11/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be 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>Notification of a serious event</p> <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>A notification made under this regulation—</p> <p>must include details of—</p> <p>the matter;</p> <p>the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and</p> <p>any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter;</p> <p>must be made or confirmed in writing.</p> <p>(Regulation 40(4)(e)(5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p>  | 20/02/2019 |
| <p>Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>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>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> | 20/02/2019 |

the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

#### Schedule 2

Information required in respect of persons seeking to carry on, manage or work at a children's home:

Two written references, including a reference from the person's most recent employer, if any.

If a person has previously worked in a position involving work with children or vulnerable adults, verification so far as reasonably practicable of the reason why the employment or position ended.

Documentary evidence of any qualifications which the person considers relevant for the position.

A full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, in writing.

(Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))

## Recommendations

- Some records may be kept electronically (regulation 38) provided that this information can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. Electronic records should be held at the individual home in accordance with data protection principles. IT systems should ensure the safe storage of these records and business continuity planning should be in place to prevent loss or damage to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. 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)
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

## 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

Jacqueline Georghiou, social care inspector

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