

SC423753

Registered provider: Ruskin Mill Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable trust and is part of a specialist school that uses Practical Skills Therapeutic Education. It is registered as a children's home and offers care and accommodation for between 38 and 52 weeks for up to five children or young people who attend the specialist school. The children and young people have a broad range of learning, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, particularly autistic spectrum disorders. The manager has been registered since February 2017.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 January 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 11 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2017	Full	Outstanding
13/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
02/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- 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)

In particular, ensure that staff are provided with training or information about county lines and child criminal exploitation.

- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.2)

In particular, ensure that there is a system to collate the feedback obtained from others.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Each young person makes exceptional progress in all areas of their life. The significant improvements that they make are sustained over many years. This is because of the high quality and individualised care and attention that the young people receive. The young people's complex and diverse needs are met by the knowledgeable staff team that knows the young people extremely well and keeps up to date with their needs.

To support their growth and development, the young people are set regular personal targets. These promote ongoing progress and achievement, such as improved personal care skills. Young people are very involved in setting their targets, which motivates them to change. A parent spoke highly of the manager and staff and said: 'I am so pleased with everything they have done. They give so much love, care and support. I can't believe my child's transformation.'

All the young people have excellent attendance and engagement at the school that is on the same site. This is particularly significant for one young person whose previous school could not safely educate them. Staff continually promote the importance of education so that the young people achieve excellent results and qualifications. The young people benefit enormously from a service that combines care and education seamlessly. The staff team and school staff work closely together, and information is shared at the daily handover meeting. This close working arrangement offers consistency between the

young people's home and school life. This is important for the young people who need structure and routine in their lives. The young people enjoy opportunities for extra learning and development, such as attending work experience. Young people successfully move to higher education courses. As a result, the young people's overall skills improve, they have an increased chance of employment and they benefit from the staff's ability to provide enhanced integration into the local community.

Staff endorse the importance of physical and emotional well-being. They receive training in holistic support and care to teach the young people about the importance of health and nutrition. Weekly food planning focuses on healthy options. Staff use fresh local produce, including from a biodynamic garden where young people work. Young people also grow their own fruit and vegetables. Staff place a great deal of significance on preparing food and eating with the young people at mealtimes. This provides a homely atmosphere and a natural way of nurturing the young people.

The young people keep fit through enjoying a variety of social and recreational activities. These include long bike rides, going to the gym and playing goalball. Photographs show the achievement of one young person who was successful in winning a national competition. The young people learn to work as a team and benefit from an increase in self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, they develop improved social skills.

Transitions from the home have been successful due to the manager creating bespoke plans and packages of care. Living in this home enhances young people's life chances and makes them resourceful. One young person was able to move to independent adult accommodation due to the self-care, daily and practical living skills that they developed. This progress was exceptional, taking into account their starting point. Staff continue to provide emotional and practical support for those young adults that need it. This includes working with external agencies to help support the young adults to maintain their tenancies.

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

The staff team is committed to keeping the young people safe. The staff have a thorough understanding of and insight into the young people's vulnerabilities. Those young people that need it have higher levels of staff supervision. The staff team uses everyday discussions and planned key-work sessions to educate the young people about the potential risks and dangers. Staff are creative in providing opportunities for the young people to show they can keep themselves safe. This includes allowing one young person to walk from home to school. Another young person was supported by staff to use public transport. This allows young people to develop keeping-safe skills as part of growing up and becoming more independent.

The young people are relaxed in their home, which contributes to making them feel safe and secure. As some young people struggle with change, the management team considers the needs of the young people living at the home when looking at new referrals. Impact risk assessments contain full information about the new young person. The manager gives careful deliberation and creates a tailor-made introduction plan.

Robust care planning helps to reduce any negative impact on others. Consequently, the new young person settles quickly.

Some of the young people have lived at the home for many years and form strong, trusting relationships with the staff team. The exceptional quality of the relationships helps the young people open up about sensitive issues. The young people receive emotional support from the staff team and the on-site therapists, including speech and language, movement (eurythmy), art and occupational therapists. The emotional well-being of the young people is given a high priority. The holistic support and care they receive leads to improved emotional health, such as reduced levels of anxiety and self-harming behaviours.

Behaviour management is exceptional. Because the staff team has excellent relationships with the young people and knows them well, the staff recognise when a young person is struggling emotionally. There have only been a couple of incidents that required very low-level physical intervention to keep the young person safe. A young person said: 'I used to be out of control. Now I am more chilled, relaxed, calm and more grown up.'

There has been one episode when a young person was missing for a few hours. Protocols are in place and staff know how to respond. There are no known drug or alcohol misuse issues, and the young people are not known to be subject to criminal or sexual exploitation. As the young people are vulnerable, staff closely monitor their mobile phone and internet use and educate them about the dangers of social media.

Staff have received updated safeguarding training, and the manager tests their knowledge in supervision sessions. However, staff would benefit from obtaining more knowledge and understanding about county lines and child criminal exploitation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has extensive experience of working in different residential settings with young people who have acute emotional and behavioural difficulties. She provides excellent leadership to the small staff team. The manager and staff are very child focused and ambitious for young people and have positively changed the lives of many of those in their care. The staff team provides the best support to the young people to maximise their potential. This includes the staff promoting the same care principles as the school, such as using cross-stitch and crafts at home for their therapeutic benefits.

The manager ensures that she maintains a visual presence in the home. She has an exceptional knowledge and understanding of the young people and their complex needs. Her leadership is focused on making sure that the young people have a strong voice in the running of the home and in their care planning. The manager is a strong advocate for young people. She vigorously challenges placing authorities where there are shortfalls in planning. When necessary, this includes the young people having independent advocates to make sure that their voices are heard when decisions are being made about their future.

The manager is meticulous and has implemented monitoring systems. These provide her with a thorough and effective oversight of the home. She regularly monitors the young people's academic, personal, social and emotional development. This makes sure that the young people continue to flourish and make progress. She has high expectations of the staff, and any issues with a staff member's practice or performance are quickly dealt with. This leads to a well-run and organised home.

The personable and approachable manager is passionate about imparting her knowledge to the staff team. Detailed reflective discussions take place during regular team meetings and practice-related supervision. Staff receive extensive training, and their personal and professional development is encouraged. The manager mentors them, and this gives them the confidence, skills and motivation to take on extra responsibilities, including acting up into senior positions.

The manager is forward thinking and continues to look at ways of developing the home. She undertakes a thorough review of the quality of care provided for young people. This includes seeking feedback from the young people and other stakeholders. This supports her in identifying strengths and taking action when there are areas for improvement. However, if this feedback was collated in one place, this would assist leaders and managers in their analysis and evaluation of the home for the six-monthly review.

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: SC423753

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Ruskin Mill Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Ruskin Mill, Mill Bottom, Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire GL6 0LA

Responsible individual: Constantin Court

Registered manager: Debra Dawson

Inspector

Tina Ruffles: 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
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