

1263766

Registered provider: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home is run by an experienced registered manager.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 2019

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: 12 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 12/02/2019 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 03/10/2018 | 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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement | Due date |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry);</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>(Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i)(ii))</p> | <p>03/02/20</p> |

Recommendations

- Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child’s relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children that are new to the home are beginning to form positive and nurturing attachments with staff. Staff provide care and attention to children who have not previously experienced such caring and loving interaction. This could be as basic as making a hot cup of cocoa at bedtime for a child. Simple staff actions such as this effect positive change and help to build nurturing attachments between adults and children which promote children's good and steady progress.

Children benefit from living in a well-appointed and comfortable environment where all children thrive. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and the communal areas of the home, which gives children a real sense of belonging and ownership of their living space.

Most young people receive well-planned care that is based on their clear care plan documents. For one young person, the uncertainty about her future living arrangements caused disruption in her placement as she presented with a significant number of episodes of going missing. The episodes of going missing have since decreased, and she is beginning to invest more in the home since there has been clarity about her future living plans.

Children make fair progress with their education. Personal education plans for each child require a clear plan of targets and progression to ensure that children continue to reach their educational attainment. Although managers have escalated the quality and content of education plans, this is ineffectual, as there is no clear plan for unsatisfactory escalation to senior managers. This is frustrating for children who may wish to integrate back into mainstream education. Children on part-time timetables would benefit from structured learning activities to ensure that they continue to have a rich and varied timetable. This is particularly important for those children who may be socially isolated. A recommendation has been made to address education matters.

Children have a framework for participation and are encouraged to have an active voice in their home. Regular children's meetings and direct consultations ensure that all children are listened to. Children are encouraged to express their individuality and own uniqueness in a safe and supportive environment.

Children living in the home have come from the local area. This ensures that children are familiar with their local geography, and quite often, remain at the same school. Children can maintain links with their family and friends, and where appropriate, contact arrangements are more fluid. One child has successfully transitioned to live with her family.

Throughout the inspection, professional and parental feedback was positive. A parent said, 'I am really happy with the level of care for my daughter. The communication is good. It's a loving environment for her to be in. I have no issues with the staff. They are

very good.'

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

Every attempt is made to ensure that children feel safe, are helped and are protected. There is good evidence of detailed individualised risk management and behaviour plans. These detailed plans are implemented in practice and include de-escalation techniques, and indicate a clear understanding of children's behaviours, and how they are managed. Although children access the internet through the home's computer, corporate parental guidance is in place to ensure that children can only access appropriate websites. This ensures online safety and safeguarding.

When children have been missing from the home, missing-from-care procedures are followed. One child was frequently missing from the home, and this was reported to the police. Her whereabouts were known. Staff followed suitable processes to ensure that they kept in frequent contact with the child. A breakdown of communication between the home and police led to some frustrations for staff. This has been escalated through the safeguarding team to help improve future relationships. The impact on the child has been negligible as staff took every measure to ensure that the child was safe.

Children have access to, and utilise, primary care services to support their medical and dental needs. The home has a healthy eating award, and menu choices can be adapted to ensure that children receive a well-balanced diet.

Staff cover a range of themes and subject areas through key-work sessions. Some of the sessions cover sensitive issues around identity and mental health. Staff use their knowledge, skills, empathy and understanding to support children. Staff utilise a wide range of child-friendly resources adapted to ensure that children can grasp topical themes.

A restorative model replaces sanctions to help manage challenging behaviour and maintain consistent boundaries. For one young person, there was a period of increase in his incidents. Primarily, this was due to frustrations around an education care package. Staff were expected to provide tutoring, and this led to conflict and confusion in relationships between the child and staff. There is now regular tutoring in place, and subsequently, the incidents have decreased.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager of this home is an experienced and knowledgeable manager. At the time of the inspection, she was absent from work. Her competent and knowledgeable practice manager led the inspection. Both managers bring a wealth of experience to the home, and have high aspirations for children to achieve and do well.

Managers have a good understanding of the children in their care and the progress they make. Managers are supported by a skilled staff team whose members love their work and are passionate about the children. Staff provide a high level of nurture and support

to children. Staff focus on building trusting relationships and understand the importance of addressing basic care needs to help children feel safe and cared for.

All staff and managers receive good-quality, detailed and regular supervision. Reflective discussions with managers help staff to enhance their practice and encourage them to think about how they may handle challenging situations with children. A detailed training matrix, which is available to all staff, provides for continued professional development. The members of the staff team are increasing their learning and skills in a recognised therapeutic model that focuses on nurturing attachments with children. This model helps staff to have a better understanding of childhood trauma and attachment, so they can apply this learning in their day-to-day practice.

There is evidence that managers will robustly challenge the local authority on behalf of children in their care. Managers escalate areas of poor practice in relation to care plans and/or education plans for children. Despite this, there is often slow progress within the wider authority to respond to the concerns. Managers become frustrated due to their persistent challenge and lack of response. The impact on children is a lack of clarity and uncertainty about their care plans and education plans.

While serious incidents have been notified to Ofsted as required, those notifications that have been instigated following a child protection enquiry are not always followed up with the outcome of the investigation. Senior managers and leaders with direct management responsibility for the home should be aware of the outcome of such enquiries and notify Ofsted once an outcome has been reached. A requirement has been made to address this matter.

Managers utilise external and internal monitoring systems to help improve their practice. An independent visitor attends the home to provide independent scrutiny and evaluation. There has been an improvement in this area. However, further improvements are necessary to ensure that managers are challenged effectively, to bring about changes in practice. A recommendation has been made to address this matter.

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: 1263766

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Market Street, Hyde, Tameside SK14 1AL

Responsible individual: Tracy Morris

Registered manager: Juliette Murphy

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, social care inspector

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