

# 1237582

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. The home may provide care and accommodation for no more than five children or young people.

The overall aim of the service is to provide short-break care for children and young people who need a 'break' away from their normal living environment.

The registered manager has the relevant experience and qualification for his post.

### Inspection dates: 11 to 12 March 2020

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 20 August 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/08/2018	Full	Good
18/09/2017	Full	Good
01/11/2016	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The home is preparing to change its purpose from short-break stays and outreach support in the coming months. Therefore, the number of short breaks has reduced in preparation for the transition. As a result, there were no children or young people staying at the home during the inspection. The management team has carefully planned this transition so that there is no impact on children and young people who currently receive a service from the home.

From their starting points, children and young people who visit the home have made very good progress in relation to improved family relationships, safety and improvements in education. The team has worked hard to build trusting and nurturing relationships with children and young people. As a result, goals set by teams of professionals involved in the children and young people's care have been achieved and children and young people have been rehabilitated back home to live with their family.

Consultation with children, young people and their family or carers is effective. Children and young people engage in regular conversations with staff, to talk about developments in their lives and how they aim to progress. Staff also conduct outreach sessions with children, young people and their families, which focus on factors that can affect progress and impact on their lives at home. The sessions have helped parents and carers establish improved boundaries in their home and children and young people have made better choices about their future and safety.

The staff have a wealth of experience in their roles and a good understanding of children and young people's backgrounds, which has been key in working with family members. The staff team has shown excellent levels of support to families and carers, with regular communication to maintain consistency of care. This has included offering advice and support to families and carers over the phone in times of crisis, including when children and young people are not living at the home.

The registered manager ensures that the staff team works consistently with children and young people's social workers, education placements and health professionals to ensure high levels of care. Overall, the home has a positive impact on achievements, aspirations and self-esteem. A social worker said, '[Name of young person] has really done well. She completes five days at school. Prior to attending this service, she would not attend school. She now has ambition and focus.'

Short-break care plans are robust, detailing an individualised plan of support for children and young people. They include any therapeutic needs, level of independence skills and recreational activities that children and young people enjoy. All of these are promoted while children and young people stay at the home. The team has devised a booklet for all children and young people to keep, no matter how long their visit, which summarises their stay at the home and what they have achieved.

The home has had a new kitchen fitted and is being decorated and modernised throughout, in preparation for the transition to the new service.

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

Children and young people's safety and well-being is a priority in the home. There has been positive feedback from professionals and families about the consistent approach the team adopts to safeguarding. One young person's grandmother said, 'The safety of [Name of young person] was paramount at the home. I never had a fear of anything happening to her when she was in their care.'

The referral and matching process of children and young people to the home is thorough. When needed, contingency plans are in place to ensure that staff can safely promote individual routines and care for all the children and young people. When emergency placements are agreed for children and young people, the team works hard to manage any risks and ensure that there is minimal impact on others staying at the home.

An experienced team works consistently to safeguard children and young people. The manager ensures that all staff receive suitable safeguarding training. There have been no complaints or serious allegations made by children and young people since the last inspection. The home has good links with external safeguarding agencies such as the police, the designated officer and a team that deals with child sexual exploitation or related harm.

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans are informative and updated on a regular basis. Staff have a good understanding of these documents and understand how to work with agreed strategies to minimise risks and maintain children and young people's safety. With the guidance of staff, children and young people are encouraged to negotiate safe boundaries and take age-appropriate risks during their stay at the home.

The manager ensures that all staff have a good knowledge of the missing from home protocol and, because of this, staff respond quickly when children and young people go missing from home. However, the home is not proactive in clarifying if return home interviews have taken place and obtaining any responses, views and feelings from children and young people involved. This would enable staff to understand why children and young people go missing and implement strategies to prevent them from going missing from home in the future. A recommendation has been made for the team to develop this practice.

The children and young people benefit from their stay at the home and engage positively with the staff team. Overall, children and young people are happy to receive support from the service and enjoy their time at the home. As a result of this, there has been no use of physical intervention, no serious incidents, or police involvement in relation to behaviour management.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is nurturing in his approach to caring for children and young people and this is reflective in the team's practice. The manager is passionate about his role, is a good advocate for children and young people and has a good understanding of their needs. He is proactive in ensuring that children and young people receive the services and support that they need to be able to progress.

The staff team feels supported by the registered manager and the deputy in the home. Staff say that they are listened to, are involved in decisions, and feel part of a strong team. Staff enjoy working in the team and, because of this, the turnover of staff working in the home is minimal. This equally promotes a stable staff team and consistency of care for children and young people staying at the home.

Staff receive regular supervisions and have their performance appraised at set timescales throughout the year. Staff have had training specific to children and young people's needs, to help support the children and young people to achieve the best outcomes. Team meetings take place monthly and have included regular consultation with the staff team in relation to the changes to the service in the coming months.

The manager engages staff in research-informed practice to develop their knowledge and skills in areas such as developmental trauma. The staff team has also worked together to assess the outcomes and practice of the home. This has promoted reflective practice in the team and contributed to the home's progression.

Safe recruitment practices are utilised to ensure that children and young people are protected and that all staff at the home are suitable and safe to work with them.

Monthly visits take place by an independent visitor, and the reports give a clear overview of the home and the staff's approach to safeguarding. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. His monitoring of the quality of care in the home is reflective and shows that he is always looking for ways to improve the service, for example through case file audits and service performance reviews.

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

### **Recommendations**

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Specifically, ensure that the home is proactive in clarifying if return home interviews have taken place and that any responses, views and feelings from young people involved in the interview are recorded clearly on records in the home. This is to ensure that risk assessments and strategies can be updated in the home, to enable staff to help safeguard young people and prevent them from going missing from home in the future.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 1237582

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale  
OL16 1XU

**Responsible individual:** Jill McGregor

**Registered manager:** Mark Ford

## Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector  
Claire Deary, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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