

Children's home – interim inspection

Inspection date	18/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC407929
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Our Place (2008) Ltd
Responsible individual	David French
Registered manager	Lena Greatwich
Inspector	Christy Wannop

Inspection date	18/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>Children make consistently good progress. This is a rural, isolated home, but children have really constructive community involvement and the service makes a real difference to children. Children experience expanded horizons and extensive opportunities to enjoy their lives. They practise skills that will help them participate in the community and maximise social opportunities. Children are not bored. Excellent staffing levels support children's active social lives. All children go out and about, they have hobbies, and it is the norm to be busy and doing things on an individual basis. Excellent support provided to families in their homes, and when they visit the service, helps children to experience increasingly positive relationships. Staff share ideas and skills and help parents learn techniques so that they can really enjoy their time with their children.</p> <p>Children experience secure, permanent placements. They grow up in the service, and recently a young adult has moved happily and successfully back to a small group home in her home town. Admissions are carefully planned, even at short notice, and a comprehensive assessment is done. The manager thinks carefully about the mix of children, and their vulnerabilities, to make sure that the group is a happy, compatible one.</p> <p>The registered person should consider the growing number of adults in the children's home, so that it does not exceed the definition of a children's home as a home 'wholly or mainly for children'. Two of the current eight residents are over 18 and three other young people will reach 18 this year. Not all plan to move into adult accommodation when they leave school at 19. Information is currently not clear for children, parents or placing authorities in the statement of purpose or the children's guide about how the mix of adults and children is organised to ensure children's good safety and well-being. In practice, the group works well.</p> <p>The service is continually developing and expanding. The registered person is planning to build an adult care home in the large grounds to offer care for 10 young adults, registered with the Care Quality Commission. Some young adults will move there from the children's home. The provider hopes that this will be completed within 12 months.</p>	

The new staff and children's lounge and small dining room extension is now in use. A new playground is now planned. A two-bedroom and new bathroom extension is underway. The service plans to increase its registration to 10 children.

Children and staff have lived with continual building work for a considerable period of time. Unavoidable disruption and risk have been minimised, but the grounds are a muddy building site. In this focus on the large-scale improvements, the poor facilities in one child's bedroom have not improved. Since his admission, one child has not had sufficient ordinary shelving or storage in his room for jigsaw puzzles, guitars and books. The focus on the long-term improvements to the building and facilities has had an impact on the current facilities. Children are now using a temporary, supplementary bathroom in a 'container', adjacent to the front door. They must go outside to use the shower there. The heating of this unit is not easily operated.

Risks to children are minimised without restricting their liberty or reducing their opportunities. Safeguarding is well managed. The strong response by staff when children have complained of bullying has reduced the impact of this, and has increased children's confidence that staff listen to them and will protect them.

Partnership working is also a strength. The registered person and all staff are strong advocates for children. They challenge and support in equal measure to ensure that children have the services that they need when they need them.

Staff are active, alert and enthusiastic about their work. Staff and managers value and invest in training, and make sure that skills are implemented. For example: recent refresher training in children's different communication techniques has seen an improvement in well-being and sociability. High staffing levels mean that staff can spend quality time with children. They work cooperatively with the school to support educational activities in and out of the classroom and this means that children experience coordinated, consistent, knowledgeable care from staff who really know them.

Effective managerial monitoring tracks improvements through a live development plan. Managers made a prompt response to previous regulatory shortfall and good practice recommendations. All consultants and staff are now evidentially safely recruited. Internet safety is now improved through clearer policy and guidelines. Systems for analysing physical intervention also take better account of any unusual circumstances. Managers have begun, but not yet completed, work on a policy and procedure to address the number of staff with familial relationships to each other. Plans to further improve children's opportunities for independent play by creating a creative play and craft area in an existing room are well and truly underway, after consultation with therapists. There is an atmosphere of openness, confidence and mutual respect in the home between staff and children, led by managers.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a small private company and is registered to provide care for eight young people with learning disabilities. Young people may stay after they reach 18 years old. The registered person operates a small registered school for eight young people in a separate building in the grounds.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
17/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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>6. The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, in respect of sufficient storage space in children's bedrooms, and the environment, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>(i) meet the needs of each child.</p>	<p>31/03/2017</p>

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- As part of reviewing and revising where appropriate the Statement of Purpose (regulation 16(3)(a)), the registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an explanation of any changes. This is with respect to how the registered person will arrange the increasing adult population of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who 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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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