

SC407929

Registered provider: Our Place (2008) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company and is registered to provide care for 10 children who have learning disabilities. Children may stay after they reach 18 years old. The registered person operates a small registered school in a separate building in the grounds.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 September 2017

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: 18 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Leaders and managers ensure that a well-resourced service meets children's holistic needs by providing education, therapy and high-quality care.
- Leaders and managers invest well in the future of the service with children in mind.
- Partnership working is successful.
- Managers are focused on the things that matter the most to children.
- Staff feel listened to, well trained and well supported.
- New staff induction is well thought out.
- Staff ensure that children's safety and well-being is given a high priority.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Managers do not ensure that notifications and formal reports about the quality of care are completed within agreed times or that they include consultation.
- Managers do not ensure that all records reflect children's individuality and the significant events in their life.
- Staff supervision records require improvement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/09/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)e))	30/10/2017
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))	30/10/2017
The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(4)(a)(5))	31/12/2017

Recommendations

- 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23) This is with respect to how the registered person will arrange the increasing adult population of the home.
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. Specifically, managerial monitoring should ensure consistent good quality. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62 and paragraph 14.4)
- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). This should include the date and important issues discussed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61 and paragraph 13.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The service provides holistic care for children as they grow into young adults. Only five of the nine current residents are children. Careful pre-admission assessment processes take into account older young people and children who are particularly vulnerable.

Children live in an environment that meets their needs. They benefit from good-quality living spaces and lovely gardens that include large play equipment, fruit trees and natural planting.

Individualised care is at the heart of the service. Children have a range of abilities and disabilities, which are understood by the staff team. Staff have worked well with traveller families and supporting children's ethnic identity. Children enjoy individualised leisure and holiday opportunities. For example, children go hill walking, to local youth clubs and sporting events. Staff help children to maximise their interests and enjoy life.

Children's nurses visit the service to provide support about adolescence, sexual health and relationships. Trained staff contribute to regular reviews of prescription medication and make sure that children get the medication that they need safely. A social worker said, 'Staff were very proactive when children refuse healthcare and adapt to ensure that needs are met, such as requesting visits to home and planning for appointments.'

Most children attend the organisation's small school on site. Some children go out to local college and work placements. Care and educational staff work together with parents and staff to ensure that they support local authority care and education plans. One placing authority professional reported, 'Positive changes in environment and flexible learning approaches are working well. Wonderful child-centred approaches observed.' The service provides well for children's needs to learn through play. Inside and outdoor equipment, toys and resources keep children busy and ensure they have fun.

Children and staff really benefit from the availability of an in-house team of therapists. The therapist skilled assessments, before and throughout placements, really help to focus an effective plan for daily care that is linked to placing authority aims and objectives. This also means that additional sensory or mental health services are swiftly organised. The in-house multi-disciplinary approach has identified that one child needs more help. This has resulted in focused tracking of the child's emotional and behavioural needs, a review of the placement and the creation of a small, focused staff team to work directly with the child. The in-house advocacy service helps children to make their views known.

Staff support children to develop the skills that they need to live more independently through joint care and education-focused pathway planning. This same approach successfully helps children to move on to their next specialist placement, back home

to parents, or on to foster placements. One social worker said, 'The care and school settings are working with me to plan for permanency and have always got the young person's best interests at heart.' Staff work well to make sure that children have a life outside the home through active community involvement.

Staff support children to have meaningful communication with their families, and parents are welcome at the home. Staff also use face-to-face technology to help children keep in touch with their family.

Leaders and managers respond to children's wishes and views expressed at the children's council meetings and in one-to-one consultations, to ensure that the things that will improve their experience happen. For example, some children have requested thicker curtains to keep out the early morning light, and other children have asked to move to different bedrooms and to have better food. These requests have all been carried out. Staff have also advocated on behalf of one young person, who is less able to communicate, to have a better view from his bedroom while construction work is taking place. The registered provider has covered the nearest porta cabin with a huge picture of the Malvern Hills. This 'can do' approach improves children's experience enormously.

Placing authorities and parents are very positive about the quality of care. Parents told Ofsted in a survey that their children were helped to be independent. Parents were pleased about staff relationships with children. They felt that staff understood the children's communication needs and helped them to enjoy activities and life.

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

Careful assessment and planning means that staff understand children's risks and reduce them. No child goes out alone, but all children benefit from an approach to risk management that enhances their independence in recognition of their ability and understanding. Cooperative links with local specialist police mean that staff are prepared in the event that any child goes missing or is at risk of being exploited. This has not happened.

Staff are quick to manage any behaviour that could become bullying. A placing authority professional described how the staff keep children safe. They added, 'The impact of behaviours on peers can mean that some young people are affected by hearing incidents or experience behaviours aimed at them by a peer. Staff manage these occurrences very well. It seems to nature of the settings when children with challenging behaviours live together. I do believe children are safe and strategies are in place to minimise issues.'

The organisation promotes positive behaviour through rewards and respectful relationships between staff and children. Children identify their own targets and this motivates their progress. This works whether children want a new bike in return for a long-term plan, or a special snack each time they successfully go to the toilet. The organisation is extending its approach through further training for the behavioural lead in a nationally recognised, research-based scheme. Staff seek to understand the meaning behind any challenging behaviour. The speech and language therapist advises staff on methods of enhanced communication to reduce children's frustration

and distress. This insightful approach helps children to be happier. Staff are trained to use restraint. However, they will only use restraint when it is necessary to keep children and staff safe. Some children have behaviours that staff have struggled to manage. The multi-disciplinary team provides support and advice. Managers also support staff who have been injured by children. Staff say that they talk through any incident or restraint. This supportive emphasis on restoring confidence and maintaining relationships means that staff maintain motivation and enthusiasm for their work.

Systems for safeguarding children are well developed, including a safeguarding group that meets to review and learn lessons from any incidents or allegations. Managers have high expectations of staff conduct. Managers implement effective staff disciplinary processes and conduct thorough internal investigations under the direction of the safeguarding designated officer. Staff are trained and confident in their responsibilities, including whistle-blowing.

The manager delayed making a notification to Ofsted about a safeguarding incident. However, the manager had taken the necessary action in partnership with the safeguarding authority.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

In May 2017, the service expanded to provide for an increased number of children in a new suite of bedrooms.

Good succession planning means that there has been a seamless transfer from the previous registered manager, now on maternity leave, to the current manager, who registered in July 2017. Both are experienced, qualified and skilled in managing services for children with disabilities. The responsible individual plans to hand over his responsibilities to the longer-standing registered manager on her return. The management team is stable, skilled and cooperative.

The management team, including both registered managers, and the responsible individual, works effectively to implement a development plan that drives continual improvements. However, the six-monthly reports of the review of the quality of care do not do justice to the other systems of development planning and review, or consultation with stakeholders. The registered person should consider how to streamline the regulatory and business quality reviewing systems to better reflect the positive outcomes for children and meet regulation.

Independent monthly reports have a clear focus on children's safety and well-being. However, the registered person has not always sent these reports to Ofsted promptly and some reports have been only partial documents.

There is an increasing adult population alongside children. While information about this is clear in the statement of purpose and careful matching ensures compatibility, this aspect of the group experience of children was not reviewed in the most recent report of the quality of care. The children's guide still does not contain any information about how children can expect to live alongside older young people.

There are some weaknesses in records. Staff have omitted to make reference to significant incidents in children's monthly summary reports. Staff have carelessly overwritten previous children's plans and left the wrong name. Similarly, managerial review of restraint records has not always picked up when there has been no debrief of staff after restraint. These are minor shortfalls in the overall individuality and effectiveness of care and recording.

The registered person has taken action to meet the one requirement from the previous inspection. Storage for children's possessions is now improved. One child now has a shed specifically to keep his extensive collection of possessions. He is philosophical about the amount of stuff he has and pleased that it is so well stored!

The management team, in conjunction with the multi-disciplinary team of therapists, charts children's progress and escalates concerns when necessary. Good, clear communication by managers with placing authorities and secondary health services reduces delay.

A recent turnover of staff means that a proportion of the staff team is relatively new. The registered provider has been careful to manage recruitment to the three teams to maintain the right balance of skills, experience and qualification on each shift. Creative staff deployment maximises the correct staff presence during times that are important to children. Use of weekend 'daytime only' staff, and specifically recruited drivers, ensures that children's planned activities and trips always take place. One social worker told the inspector that they 'always feel that staff and management are focused on the child and child/peer relationships'.

Comprehensive training plans link to appraisal. The majority of staff hold the nationally recognised qualification in working with children. New induction systems provide an excellent basis for staff progression to nationally recognised qualifications. This ensures that new staff learn as they shadow on shift and have the right level of competency as they conclude probationary periods. Supervision takes place regularly. Some staff supervision records do not show the day that supervision took place, nor are required actions following disciplinary action always evident. The manager does not hold a record of her own supervisions with the responsible individual. However, staff report helpful supervisory relationships with managers and supportive team working.

The responsible individual has plans to build and register with the Care Quality Commission a 10-bedded home for young adults. This, and longer-term plans for supported community housing, will enhance the opportunity for children here to have a continuity of care into adulthood. Previous extensive renovations and building works have led to disruption for children over the last two years. The responsible individual suspended building work over the summer holidays in order to reduce the impact on children. The last phase is a children's play area and additional medication room, which is planned for completion in October.

This service has great capacity for development. Reflective relationships are established with stakeholders and, most importantly, with children to ensure that leaders and managers shape the service to meet the children's needs. Parents said that staff kept in touch with them well. They felt well listened to and that any

complaints were dealt with. One local authority representative said, 'Liaison with family is good. Joint working is excellent. The ethos seems very positive and, overall, the setting is welcoming and homely.'

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: SC407929

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Our Place (2008) Limited

Responsible individual: David French

Registered manager: Lena Greatwich
Sarah Davies

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

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