

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	15/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC055357
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Sunderland City Council
Registered person address	Sunderland City Council, PO Box 102, SUNDERLAND, SR2 7DN

Responsible individual	Martin Birch
Registered manager	Graeme Conley
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	15/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The registered manager has addressed all the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection in June 2015. His regular monitoring of the performance of the home now takes account of the views of young people. This adds to the quality of information which helps to identify the home's shortfalls and build on its strengths. Ofsted are now informed promptly of any serious incidents using the online notification form. This enables the regulator to be aware of any concerns and take action if necessary to protect young people. Whenever a young person returns from being missing, one of a designated team of people independent of the home come to interview them in private. This provides an important additional safeguard, identifying any factors which led the young person to place themselves at risk in this way.</p> <p>The home continues to improve its facilities. It is about to take delivery of a six-berth caravan, providing greater flexibility of opportunity for trips away for young people. Paving is being installed in the extensive grounds. This means that young people, including those with disabilities and from other children's homes, can access the area more safely and enjoyably. Both developments have been funded from community resources, with young people themselves being involved in the bidding process. Young people have also taken part in the local authority's social worker recruitment campaign. They confidently expressed their feelings about the kind of service they expect from social workers.</p> <p>Young people are continuing to do well. They confirm that they are happy here, have good relationships with the staff, and feel safe. One young person said, 'I like it here, I would give it 11 out of 10.' Young people have varying levels of engagement with education or training placements, but in general are making good progress. This is due in part to the positive and proactive relationships which staff have with partner agencies. An education professional said, 'The home works really well with the young people in supporting them. Staff have excellent communication with the virtual school for looked after young people, which helps to provide continuity in their education.'</p>	

Young people's health is good. Some have made excellent progress in reducing their use of substances, in one case to zero. Staff have been proactive in seeking training and information on how to support young people to give up smoking. Staff are also effective in addressing young people's sexual health. They give them sound advice in matters such as contraception and relationships. Staff have a keen awareness of each young person's mental health needs. The home is piloting a research-based approach to carrying out regular assessments of young people's emotional wellbeing. This enables any necessary work to be targeted at particular areas of need, such as emotional resilience, or readiness for independence.

Young people are safe. The number of times they go missing has reduced. Some young people who were at risk of sexual exploitation are not now as vulnerable. Staff have developed greater expertise in this area and work closely with other agencies, including the police. As a result, these and other risks within the local and wider area are monitored, and appropriate action taken to protect young people. Within the home, the quality of relationships between staff and young people mean that behaviour is managed effectively and safely. The home has just been awarded platinum status by an external body for the excellence of its anti-bullying practice.

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2015	Full	Good
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2014	Full	Good
16/01/2014	Interim	Inadequate progress

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 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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