

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	16/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC062644
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	Suzanne Metcalfe
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	16/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The registered manager has addressed all statutory requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. Staffing levels have stabilised, providing greater consistency of care for young people. Quality assurance measures are more robust, enabling the registered manager to have a better understanding of the progress and experiences of each young person. For example, monthly summaries on each young person include an assessment of their emotional wellbeing. Any identified concerns are then addressed through in-house work with the young person or referral to other agencies. A member of staff said, 'We know and can evidence that all the young people have made massive progress.'</p> <p>Staff are more effective at challenging partner agencies. For example, social workers are expected to provide better quality information when young people are being considered for admission. This increases the likelihood of a successful placement.</p> <p>Staff have worked to increase their understanding of protocols around young people who go missing. Recording of such incidents is much improved, and in every case a person independent of the home conducts an interview with the young person when they return. This adds to young people's safety by enabling staff to understand why they went missing. Safeguarding practice has been further improved by ensuring that risk assessments on young people take account of all relevant historical information. The registered manager has made the procedures for dealing with allegations of staff misconduct more robust and transparent. This ensures that any such incident receives the appropriate level of independent scrutiny.</p> <p>Other improvements include a complete review of the supervision and training of staff. Staff receive monthly supervision which is child-focused and challenges the member of staff to reflect on their practice and its impact on each young person. This supervision also identifies any skill deficits which are then addressed through additional training. The home is in the process of moving to paperless record</p>	

keeping. This increases the accuracy and confidentiality of case files while enabling easy access by young people who may want to see what staff write about them.

Staff provide a nurturing environment and deliver programmes of care tailored to the needs of each individual young person. This enables young people to become more resilient and confident in their own abilities. One young person said, 'I have built great relationships with the staff and have lots of one-to-one time with them. This is my first experience of living in a care home, and it's much better than I expected.'

School attendance is good, and staff support young people to take part in a wide range of stimulating activities. For example, one young person enjoyed a skiing trip to France with their school. Another attends weekly drama and film classes at a nearby theatre with a national reputation for excellence. Young people are in good health. Staff encourage them to develop healthy lifestyles, for example, by enrolling them in the gym and providing advice and support around food choices.

The home is good at protecting young people. Close working with other agencies enables information about potential concerns such as sexual exploitation to be shared and addressed. There is little bullying. As a result, young people's experience here is one of comfort and security. A young person said, 'I feel very safe here.'

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
10/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
29/10/2014	Interim	Inadequate progress
30/06/2014	Full	Adequate
30/12/2013	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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