

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC433430
Inspector	Rachel Griffiths
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Esland North Limited
Registered person address	Unit 4, Ednaston Home Farm Brailsford ASHBOURNE Derbyshire DE6 3AY
Responsible individual	John Stamp
Registered manager	Lynn Allen
Date of last inspection	13/03/2014

Inspection date	15/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people achieve positive outcomes and make good progress while living in this home. As a result of young people receiving personalised care from a highly skilled and committed staff team and young people are provided with an excellent opportunity to reach their full potential.

A key strength of this home is the consultation and engagement of young people in all aspects of the care provided to them. Young people are central to the running of the home, and are fully consulted during the preparation and review of their placement plans. Young people are respected and have very positive relationships with a supportive and consistent staff team. The home is a calm and pleasant place for young people to live. It is an environment where young people have access to a wide range of leisure pursuits and the opportunity to develop in self-confidence and form a positive view of themselves.

Young people are kept safe by a dedicated staff team. The managers and staff work very closely with the police, education and health services as well as specialist organisations to ensure that the holistic needs of young people are met. Detailed risk assessments and missing from care policies which are robustly implemented further ensure the safety of young people in this home.

The management of the home is strong. The Registered Manager is very reflective in her approach and demonstrates a detailed awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Improved monitoring and recording systems have recently been introduced which are effective in tracking all aspects of the running of the home. This helps to ensure that the quality of care and outcomes for young people continue to improve.

One requirement and one recommendation are made as a result of this inspection. These relate to written recording of actions taken following allegations being made and minor documentary errors in the home's Statement of Purpose. These shortfalls do not have an impact on the safety and well-being of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The main house can accommodate two young people and the cottage annex on the other side of the driveway can accommodate one.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2014	Interim	good progress
09/01/2014	Full	good
03/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
13/06/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	The procedure under paragraph (1) (b) (The registered provider shall prepare and implement a written policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect) - shall in particular provide for written records to be kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of the action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2) (d))	12/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- The children's home has a clear Statement of Purpose which is available to and understood by staff and children and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in a number of ways as a result of living in this home. One social worker commented in respect of a young person: 'He has made progress in terms of his relationships with adults, his behaviour has improved, he is engaging in a creative package of education, his health has improved and he has benefited from a good daily routine.' Young people grow in confidence and develop improved life and social skills. As a result, their life chances are significantly improved.

Young people develop a far more positive self-view and develop positive relationships with adults. For some young people, because of their previous experiences, this has been excellent progress. Their emotional outbursts reduce in frequency, duration and intensity. Young people become more confident and all have developed some level of trust in the adults who care for them.

Young people who have experienced significant difficulties in attending school or engaging in education show significant improvement while living in this home. Young people now eagerly engage with individualised packages of education which have been tailored around their needs and interests. This engagement in education enhances young people's sense of achievement and their opportunities and choices in adulthood are greatly improved.

All young people make good progress in respect of their health. Their physical health is enhanced by attending routine health checks, undertaking regular physical activity and eating a healthy balanced diet. For some, this is significant progress from their starting point. Young people develop improved self-care skills, including personal hygiene. This assists young people with the development of personal relationships. It also helps young people feel good about themselves and raises their self-esteem.

Relationships between young people and their families are well supported in difficult circumstances. Arrangements are negotiated and agreed very sensitively with placing social workers and in consultation with young people. Young people's views are respected regarding whom they see and do not see. This, and support during contact sessions from a trusted member of staff, enables young people to maintain links with their family members. This is something which is important to them. It helps them to understand their heritage and helps improve their sense of identity.

Young people are well prepared for their eventual move to independence and adult life. Relevant young people have the opportunity to move into a separate semi-independence annex next to the main house. Young people learn to manage their money and meet their own personal care needs in a safe and protective environment. Increased confidence and well-developed life skills have assisted and prepared young

people greatly when they move on to the next stage of their lives.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people have excellent relationships with staff. Young people speak positively about them. Observations of staff demonstrate that they are extremely supportive and caring. A social worker commented: 'The staff are very calm and provide the young person with strategies to manage his behaviours. They understand his attachment needs and why he behaves in a certain way.' The positive relationships young people have with a consistent team of committed staff help provide a secure emotional base from where young people can develop.

When young people's needs dictate that they are unable to manage in mainstream school, the Registered Manager has been extremely proactive and challenging to ensure that alternative provisions are provided for young people without delay. As a result, creative alternative provision is provided to maximise their potential. Education and care staff work closely together to build on young people's strengths. They actively encourage young people to achieve, through both formal or informal educational activities. Staff celebrate young people's achievements. This helps young people feel a sense of achievement and raises their self-esteem.

The manager and staff have extremely positive relationships with partner agencies. For example, excellent relationships with a local college resulted in a young person being swiftly enrolled on a training course which enabling her to fulfil her aspirations in working towards her chosen career path. Excellent relationships have also been developed with the police, youth offending services and specialist private agencies who work with the most vulnerable young people with complex emotional or mental health difficulties. Such agencies report high satisfaction with the working relationship they have with the staff team. The positive working relationship with partner agencies provides young people with the best opportunities to access appropriate support, address their difficulties, and reach their full potential in the future.

Young people's emotional health and well-being are enhanced as a result of high levels of consistent care being provided to them by a very stable staff team. Staff are knowledgeable, skilled and committed. They communicate well with each other. A staff member commented: 'There is a high level of trust between staff and an agreed way of working with young people.' This helps young people develop a sense of security within the placement. Comprehensive and regularly reviewed and updated care plans and risk assessments are also consistently implemented. This and excellent staffing ratios ensure that care planned for young people is consistently delivered to a high standard. This provides certainty for young people and impacts

positively on their sense of safety and stability.

Staff are proactive in ensuring that young people have access to appropriate, extensive and individualised leisure pursuits. All young people are engaged in a number of different leisure interests. One young person recently participated in a charity bike ride, and raised money for a local charity. Not only did this have benefits for the young person physically and socially, it enabled the young person to enjoy a sense of achievement and also to feel an integral part of the local community.

Young people are respected and valued in the home. Their views are continually sought in respect of the day- to-day running of the home through weekly young people's meetings and regular key working sessions. Young people's views contribute to the home's development plan and the decoration and furnishing of the home. Young people are fully involved in their own care planning and their views are incorporated into these plans. Excellent levels of communication and consultation impact positively on young people. They feel listened to and this helps raise their self-esteem and confidence.

The home is maintained to a high standard. It is very comfortable and homely. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and decorated in colours of each young person's choice. Young people's achievements are celebrated and displayed on the walls in the home. A full record of young people's achievements and experiences are also documented in life story books which are continually updated throughout young people's placements. When young people move on, they leave with an exceptionally good record of their achievements and experiences. This helps them feel valued and further improves their self-esteem.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff are well trained in respect of safeguarding practices and work in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to respond should a young person disclose any form of abuse to them or should they have any concerns about the practice of other staff. This reduces the risk of abuse in the home.

There are no instances of bullying in the home. Policies in respect of this are robust and well displayed around the home. Young people are encouraged to report any issues of concern. This helps young people to develop a strong sense of safety within the home.

Young people's safety and well-being are also promoted through comprehensive risk management strategies. These recognise young people's individual vulnerabilities while supporting their development through engagement in different activities and experiences in the community. Young people are fully involved in the decision-making process in respect of their own safety. Consequently, they are much more

likely to work within the guidelines of their risk assessments.

Some young people have a significant history of going missing prior but this has been reduced significantly while they are living in this home. Staff implement robust multi-agency risk assessments in relation to young people going missing. This and effective inter agency working ensures that on occasions when young people do go missing they are soon located and welcomed back into the home. Partner agencies speak extremely positively about the insight and understanding of the manager in respect of young people who go missing. One professional said: 'The home does everything in their power to keep young people safe.'

Young people's behaviour is well managed in this home. An embedded ethos of proactive behaviour management is effective. Young people have incentives to work towards which promote positive behaviour. As a result, there have been few negative consequences and few physical interventions since the last inspection. When physical intervention is used as a last resort, this is appropriately recorded and young people are always asked to express and record their views in respect of this. The manager has a robust overview of all negative sanctions and physical interventions. This increases her capacity to improve practice further in this area.

The home is a physically safe and secure environment. All health and safety assessments and checks are undertaken on a regular basis. Fire drills take place regularly during the day and night and the effectiveness of each fire drill is well recorded. Safety equipment in the home, including electrical installations are checked and serviced at regular intervals. This contributes to young people's safety and well-being.

Consultation between the manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is good. Allegations and concerns which come to the attention of the manager are dealt with swiftly and in consultation with the LADO. This ensures that young people are safeguarded while allegations or concerns are investigated. However, despite appropriate actions being taken, these are not always clearly recorded. As a result, there is not a clear audit trail of how conclusions in relation to safeguarding concerns are reached. While not impacting on the safety and well-being of young people, incomplete information hinders the manager's effective monitoring of safeguarding concerns and the capacity to improve responses in the future.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager is very experienced and has been in post in this home for two years. She is on target to complete to required manager's qualification within agreed timescales.

The home is well managed by a committed and enthusiastic management team. The Registered Manager is extremely knowledgeable and insightful about the issues that

affect young people and the research and theories which underpin certain behaviours which young people display. One social worker said: 'A key strength of the home is the manager's good psychological insight into the young people's needs and this filters down to the staff and how they manage the young person.' Staff are motivated by the management team. Staff morale is high and staff turnover is low. This ensures that young people are well supported by a consistent and cohesive team. This helps maintain the outstanding quality of care being provided.

Staff undertake a comprehensive programme of training which ensures that they are competent in meeting the individual needs of young people. The recommendation in respect of training made at the last inspection has been met. All staff have received training in respect of the specific needs of young people. For example, staff have recently undertaken training in respect of autistic spectrum disorders, how to treat a young person with a nut allergy, attachment issues and child sexual exploitation. This is in addition to refreshers in mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. Staff also receive regular, formal and group supervisions. This ensures that practice is monitored and provides scope for further improvements in the delivery of care. Young people benefit greatly from the care provided to them by skilled staff who are equipped to meet individual needs.

Management monitoring systems have improved since the last inspection. Data in respect of young people's progress and their patterns of behaviour is collected. Patterns and trends are then analysed and young people's placement plans and risk assessments are updated accordingly. The data collected and subsequent analysis of it enables the manager to clearly demonstrate the impact and value living in the home is having on young people's lives.

Quality assurance monitoring systems, both internal and external, are effective in identifying strengths in the home as well as minor shortfalls. Some consultation with young people, parents where appropriate, and stakeholders takes place within these systems. This results in monitoring reports being more rigorous and effective in driving improvements.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides detailed information to parents and placing authorities about the care, support and services that the home offers. There are, however, some minor inconsistencies and errors within the document in relation to the home's surveillance policies, the home's supervision policy and in relation to the police authority which works in partnership with the home. While this does not have any impact on young people, it means that parents and stakeholders do not have absolute clarity in respect of the service the home offers.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.