

SC472381

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home. The home provides care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home's registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 January 2019

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: 15 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/12/2017	Full	Good
03/11/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2016	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
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(iii)(vii))</p> <p>In particular, the home should ensure that education is arranged so that children and young people are invested in working with providers they trust and in whom they have confidence.</p>	15/03/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, staff, including the management team, should undertake training on the issues relating to county lines behaviour, as it might affect children and young people placed in the home.</p>	15/03/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people make very good progress from their starting points. They build excellent relationships with members of staff who care for them. Children and young people know that their carers prioritise their needs over everything else. This means that children and young people grow up knowing that other people value their worth and want the best for them.

Children and young people make considerable progress in their emotional well-being. The skilled staff team provides consistent, secure care to the children and young people. Child and adolescent mental health services offer additional support to children and young people. Staff consult with mental health professionals. This means that children and young people receive therapeutically informed care. As a result, children and young people's emotional health improves, as do their prospects for the immediate and long-term future.

Children and young people are generally healthy. They attend routine and urgent medical appointments. One child approached staff several times when he was worried about his health. This shows that children and young people are confident that their carers will take their concerns seriously and can help them.

Children and young people make progress with their education from their starting points. Children and young people who have had interrupted schooling return to full-time education. Children and young people are encouraged to aspire. They understand the benefit of education in meeting their goals. This has improved their chances of achieving the qualifications they need as adults. Occasionally, external barriers get in the way of children and young people receiving the education they need. When this happens, the home should make greater efforts to understand those barriers and ensure that the right support is put in place. A requirement is made in this respect.

Staff help children and young people to build good relationships with members of their family. For one child, this included having Christmas dinner with his family in a local restaurant. One relative said, 'The staff are brilliant. They are very helpful and genuinely care about [name of child].' Staff encourage family members to come to the home and see children and young people. They try to make such visits as natural as possible. Their approach to keeping in touch with family means that children and young people improve relationships with relatives who might offer support once they are no longer in the care of the local authority.

Children and young people live in a home that is warm and very well presented. There is a homely feel to the communal areas, which are very well maintained. Any repairs needed are arranged quickly. Staff encourage children and young people to suggest how they want their bedrooms decorated, including posters. Broken items are replaced as needed. One child had his bedroom decorated as a surprise when he was away on holiday. He was delighted with the results. Because of these efforts, children and young

people know that staff value them and want them to have nice surroundings. This helps improve their self-esteem.

Children and young people take part in a range of activities with members of staff. These include going on holiday, as well as local events such as quad-biking or going to the cinema. Staff encourage friends of children and young people to take part in these activities, when this is appropriate. Members of staff include photographs and mementos from these experiences in life story work. Children and young people are building very positive memories from these experiences. These will be invaluable to them, as they grow up.

Children and young people take part in discussions about the running of their home. When their wishes cannot be accommodated, members of staff explain why not. Children and young people are encouraged to take part in reviews of their placements. By taking part in decision-making, both on a small scale and about much more significant outcomes, children and young people are learning that they can influence the future direction of their lives. This improves their confidence and sense of self-worth.

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

Members of staff work tirelessly to protect children and young people from harm. Staff are committed to talking about risk-taking behaviours with children and young people. Usually, this has positive results. One relative said, 'Staff could not do more to keep [name of child] safe.' Children and young people gain an excellent understanding about their personal vulnerabilities. This helps them to think about their actions and make the best decisions for themselves. Talking about risk-taking behaviours will have lasting effects for children and young people. They will be better equipped to face challenges when they grow up and become young adults.

When children and young people go missing, staff do everything they can to find them and bring them home. If it is safe to do so, they search for a missing child. Sometimes, assessments show that staff would be at risk from searching for children and young people. In those situations, staff ensure that the police understand the level of risk a child faces. They insist that police search actively for a child or young person. Children and young people are offered return home interviews. Members of staff talk to them about the potential impact of being missing from care. This approach gives a strong message to children and young people that their carers worry about them and want them to be safe. Knowing they are kept in mind by their carers is good for their sense of self-worth.

Risk assessments are used to good effect in this home. They are individualised for each child or young person. Assessments contain enough information to quickly highlight specific risks, without being unwieldy. Members of staff review risk assessments regularly, and changes are made as required. Risk assessments are enhanced by the strong relationships that members of staff have with children and young people. As a result, children and young people make progress from their starting points.

Members of staff undertake training to learn about the risks that the children and young people in their care face. Staff are informed by the knowledge they gain from their training. As a result, children and young people are safer and they know that their carers are serious about protecting them. Members of staff do not have up-to-date knowledge about the risks from county lines. A requirement is made to ensure that training on this topic is undertaken.

Physical intervention is rarely used in this home. Instead, staff use the positive relationships they have with children and young people to work with them effectively. When staff do need to restrain a child or young person, this is only after de-escalation methods have been tried and have failed. Restraints are recorded by staff and reviewed by the manager, to ensure that any lessons are learned. Because of the skilled care the members of staff provide, children and young people are growing up without their behaviour being physically managed. This is a positive message for them. Their sense of autonomy is increased. They are learning that there are better ways to manage difficult situations than physical control.

Safe recruitment practice ensures that no one works with the children and young people who would potentially pose a risk. The staff team is sufficient for the needs of the home and agency workers are not used. New members of staff do not begin work with the children and young people until all checks have been received. This means that vulnerable children and young people are not exposed to staff who might cause them harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and deputy manager are effective leaders for this home. They want the best for the children and young people in their care, and they inspire their staff team to want the same. The manager has a strong vision for how she wants the children and young people to be looked after. She is committed to making improvements to the way the home runs. Because of the manager's vision, children and young people experience the best care possible and make progress.

The manager advocates for the children and young people with partner agencies. If a service is not being provided that would help children and young people, she challenges effectively. The manager acts in the way that a good parent would. This means that children and young people in her care receive the same services as a child living in a family.

The manager and deputy manager lead by example. They take time to talk through difficult events with the staff team. After one very challenging situation, the manager talked to the staff team about what had happened. She encouraged staff members to acknowledge their personal views, but then helped them to focus on the needs of the children and young people. Because of her skills, children and young people have continued to receive high-quality, loving care.

Supervision and appraisals of practice take place regularly. By using restorative discussions in supervision to help staff think about changes to their practice, the approach is becoming embedded throughout the home. Staff are more likely to use restorative practice successfully with children and young people if they value it for themselves.

Effective recruitment of good-quality staff has had a positive effect on the home. There has been a stable staff team for many months. Members of staff speak positively about the support they receive from the manager and senior members of staff. Newer members of staff are enthusiastic about their roles and want to develop further. As a result, children and young people are looked after by carers who enjoy their role and want to do their best.

Members of staff, including the management team, are appropriately qualified for their roles. Senior members of staff are encouraged to achieve higher level qualifications. This means that they get the skills to support the manager or deputise for her if she is not available. The manager ensures that all staff complete mandatory training as part of their induction process. This means that children and young people are looked after by staff who are confident and competent in their role.

Children and young people are being looked after by staff who are regularly improving their knowledge and skills. The manager organises extra training and this enhances the staff's ability to look after the children and young people. They are becoming more effective carers. This has led to improved behaviour by the children and young people, as they have trust in their carers' abilities.

The manager has effective monitoring tools in place. The systems the manager has developed mean that she can quickly identify areas that could be better. She responds well to suggestions from external monitoring processes. Because of the quality of the manager's oversight of the home, standards do not drop. The manager knows when she must challenge any delay in care planning from external agencies, including social workers. Because of her scrutiny, children and young people receive the level of care they need to be able to make the best progress possible.

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: SC472381

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Registered provider address: PO Box 99, Middlesbrough TS1 2QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Katie Dawson

Inspector

Jane Titley, social care inspector

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