

SC057718

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 20 April 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2017	Full	Outstanding
05/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
04/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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 registered person must maintain records for each child which—</p> <p>(a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 36 (1) (a))</p> <p>In particular, plans or reports relating to the child such as the education, health and care plan.</p>	30/12/2018

Recommendations

- For children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9).

With particular reference to redecoration of the sensory room, renewal of equipment and lighting in the sensory room, replacement or cleaning of soiled carpets, repainting of some young people’s rooms, repainting of the landing areas and the replacement of some young people’s bedroom blinds.

- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people benefit from the highly sensitive and nurturing care that is offered at this home. The staff are fully committed to ensuring that each young person reaches their potential and that their complex needs are not barriers to an enjoyable and fulfilling life. Staff have high expectations and ambitions for young people and this underpins the care that they offer on a daily basis.

Developing and maintaining levels of independence for young people is a priority for

staff. Through persistent and sensitive encouragement, young people learn self-care skills that result in a reduction in the level of personal care that is necessary.

Young people make excellent progress from their starting points and, through the patience and dedication that staff bring to their roles, this progress is maintained. For example, young people who could not previously tolerate the emotional and social demands of attending school are now attending regularly. One young person who had poor sleep patterns is now in a good, healthy routine that supports his learning at school. Another young person who was unable to eat meals at a table with others is now fully engaged at mealtimes and eating with cutlery.

Young people are cared for by staff that fully understand their means of communication. This enables young people to build trusting relationships with staff and to flourish in an environment that is consistent, stable and caring. Over time, young people cease to try to harm themselves, or others, to express their distress. This communication is replaced with the use of words, pictures or sounds.

Through continual encouragement and support, young people learn how to express choice and preference, such as in the clothes that they wear, meals that they like and activities that they do. They are offered life-enhancing and fun experiences that previously they did not have access to.

Staff work very hard to establish trust with young people's families and as a result, the young people's time spent with relatives has increased and no longer requires supervision. One social worker commented: 'Against all the odds, they have formed trusted relationships with the family.' Another social worker said that staff had been: 'Exemplary in dealing with his family.'

Professionals and parents described the care given to the young people as 'brilliant', 'perfect', 'exceptional' and 'unlocking [young people's] abilities'. Communication from staff and managers is considered to be timely, focused, transparent and honest.

Staff and managers ensure that their care of young people is informed by up-to-date methods and research, and accreditation to a national specialist charity supports this learning.

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

Young people are not subject to physical restraint or any sanctions. Rather, they are nurtured, encouraged and fully supported to change behaviours and to manage their emotions. This is testament to the level of understanding that staff have about young people and the techniques that are used to prevent behaviour that might be harmful or socially unacceptable.

Staff use various methods to communicate the changes that are considered desirable. For example, one young person who would often hit themselves or others has learned, through the use of social story boards, other ways of expressing themselves.

Vulnerable young people are understood very well, and this understanding translates into highly individualised approaches that are used by staff to keep young people safe. Staff understand young people's behaviour and what this behaviour is communicating. Incidents are infrequent and are quickly and sensitively managed by staff to ensure that young people return to a positive emotional state.

Detailed risk assessments, continuous staff discussions about young people and regular liaison with family and professionals ensure that young people live in a safe and stable environment. Managers consider at length the impact that any young person joining the home might have on those currently resident. These decisions are taken in discussion with all the staff and are carefully planned.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and was registered to manage the home in 2007. The manager is passionate about her role in providing the best possible care to young people. She understands this role well and the importance of ensuring that staff who work at the home also share this vision.

Her leadership is well established, and she is supported by a dedicated staff team. The staff benefit from regular supervision, regular team meetings, appraisals and an open-door policy for seeking advice.

The management team and staff work cohesively, and this is underpinned through an open and honest dialogue that values new ideas and ways of working. The strengths of each member of staff are understood well and managers strive for a team balance in skill-base, age, gender and life experience.

The managers promote a learning environment and new members of staff are fully supported to study and to gain the necessary qualifications attached to their roles. All members of staff have access to an ongoing training programme that complements the needs of the young people at the home.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes in the staffing team. To prevent any disruption to the quality of care that young people receive, managers have ensured that all new staff are suitably inducted and supported. They have also assisted in covering shifts to maintain continuity of care for young people. This in turn has limited managerial oversight of some documents. For example, goals and aims in plans are without timescales or the necessary detail to fully review their impact or the approaches used. Some documents have been updated by hand and are difficult to read and some current local authority plans are not available to staff.

The home is reasonably well maintained and welcoming. However, some areas of the home require refreshing and some fixtures require renewing.

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: SC057718

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Registered provider address: The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Carmel Perry

Inspector

Pauline Yates: social care inspector

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