

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC485423
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	The Serendipity Centre Limited
Registered provider address	1st Floor, Goodlands House, St Lukes Close, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2US

Responsible individual	Susan Tinson
Registered manager	Lorraine Sawyer
Inspector	Amanda Maxwell

Inspection date	13/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC485423

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have made good progress from their starting points since arriving at the home.
- Young people are developing strategies which assist them to self-regulate and moderate their behaviour and emotions. They are engaging in a variety of activities that provide opportunities to express themselves. Each young person accesses protected activities of their choosing. These include horse-riding, trampolining and other physical activities.
- Young people attend and engage in full-time education. All young people make progress within their individual capabilities. Staff have good relationships with school, promoting consistency of the approach used to support young people. Young people's achievements are being celebrated and rewarded.
- Staff support young people to develop their life, social and personal skills by offering a wide variety of activities and opportunities. Young people are learning to plan, shop, prepare and cook basic meals. They are also learning other tasks and each day they complete basic household chores.
- Staff promote a healthy lifestyle, with young people being encouraged to address their basic health needs. Staff refer to additional health services when required. Young people have engaged in regular key work sessions, providing invaluable education, learning and review of concerns.
- Young people are involved in the key decisions made in the home.
- Staff use a restorative approach to behaviour management. Young people are involved in selecting appropriate sanctions.
- Young people report that they feel safe and have a key adult whom they can trust and confide in. Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach with young people.
- The staff's threshold for acting on safeguarding concerns is low, with a high level of incidents well reported, referred and recorded, with clarity of investigation and outcome. Staff focus on supporting young people to explore their feelings, emotions and concerns. They then support them to explore ways to resolve and address these.
- Staff receive good-quality, varied training that is specific to their role.
- Staff are positive and proactive in their approach with young people, seeking to find solutions and work through the challenges that they face.
- Managers and leaders are clear about the home's strengths and

weaknesses, utilising the independent reviews of the home and other sources to identify key areas to develop and improve.

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and ‘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>In order to meet the children’s views, wishes and feelings standard, the registered person must ensure that each child:</p> <p>(2)(b)(i) is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives, in particular with regard to the imposition of a measure of discipline (Regulation 7 (2)(b)(i)).</p>	18/9/2016
<p>The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children’s home if the individual satisfies the requirement of full and satisfactory information being available in relation to each of the matters in Schedule 2. This is in particular regard to a full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, in writing (Regulation 32 (2)(a) (3)(d)).</p>	18/09/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis, specifically prior to admission (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- Children must be listened to and enabled to report any allegations at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report any allegation of abuse immediately to a senior

manager within the home. Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with the home's child protection policy. Specifically, to ensure that concerns raised have a clear evidence trail to show a rationale for how decisions are made, with an outcome provided to young people ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.17).

- All managers working in a children's home must have the qualification in regulation 28(2) within the relevant timescales listed in regulation 28(3). All staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5). The registered person may extend the time period if the member of staff hasn't worked in the role for a prolonged period, such as sick leave or maternity leave, or if it is not reasonable to expect the member of staff to complete it in this timescale due to the nature of the hours they work ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12).
- An effective introduction to a home will take into account the child's abilities and capacity to understand and retain information. Such an introduction may take place over a period of time and may be delivered in different formats according to the child's communication and cognitive abilities. The registered person should ensure that staff establish the child's understanding of key information about living in the home and the expectations of their care in order to establish whether there are gaps in the child's understanding ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.8).
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should: detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education); detail the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff (to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose); detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications); detail the process for managing and improving poor performance; detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)); and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to care for up to five children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned by an organisation which also owns other homes and a school. The home specifically cares for girls who may have experienced emotional and/or physical trauma as the result of abuse or have a mental health condition. They support each young person with a therapeutic approach. The home is located in a quiet residential area within easy access of community-based services and resources.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/07/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Young people are all making good progress from their starting points. Staff celebrate and reward young people for their achievements. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable and provide good-quality care to the young people who reside there. Staff provide stability and consistency through a caring, nurturing approach.</p> <p>Young people are in full-time education with staff supporting and encouraging them to have good attendance. Staff encourage and support young people to complete homework tasks while also offering additional activities which supplement their education. Young people have made significant achievements progressing with their education and academic abilities. Staff attend meetings and reviews with young people to review plans and explore opportunities for the future.</p> <p>Staff support young people to prepare and attend health appointments. They support a young person to address long-standing health issues, which is having a positive impact on their physical and emotional well-being. Young people are engaging in a variety of services, with staff referring to specialist services when required. Detailed health plans provide clarity about need and what is required to meet those needs and when. Staff provide good-quality support to young people, enabling them to address their fears and attend medical appointments and reviews.</p> <p>Purposeful one-to-one sessions occur regularly with all staff completing them. They have provided essential education, covering a wide variety of topics and themes with young people, exploring risky behaviours and their impact. Topics have included smoking, relationships, bereavement and media safety. They allow opportunities to develop relationships and build trust. Staff are interested in young people, their individual needs and what is affecting or worrying them. Staff prioritise time to talk with young people and support them to explore ways to manage worries and anxieties. Staff and young people have good relationships, with young people seeking guidance, physical and emotional support from staff.</p> <p>Staff encourage and facilitate opportunities for young people to follow their interests and hobbies. Staff offer cooking and art and craft activities, with the evidence of this seen around the home in photographs and decorations. Staff</p>	

support young people to enjoy going to theme parks, meals out, trips and walks. Young people have a full programme of activities on site and off. Young people attend voluntary groups and clubs with each learning and developing new skills.

Young people are encouraged to engage in therapy, which is provided in varying forms, for example 'My Time' protected activities and one-to-one sessions with therapists. The organisation employs a specialist who contributes to the overview and planning of individual therapy plans. Young people also write or voice their worries and concerns and staff explore and act upon these. Young people are learning positive strategies to manage and regulate their emotions and anxieties safely.

Staff support each young person to develop their life skills, with each having targets and goals to aim towards. Young people plan and prepare simple meals, and complete basic household chores and laundry tasks. Young people have made progress, becoming more independent during their time at the home. Staff support young people to develop many skills but evidence is lacking to reflect all of the work completed. Managers are reviewing how they evidence this.

Staff and young people have an investment in the home, with each contributing to the environment and its presentation. Young people have filled pots with plants and these are on display in the garden. Young people have chosen their bedroom decorations and soft furnishings personalising their bedrooms. The voice of the young person is present throughout the home. Staff seek their views and contributions prior to reviews and within plans. Staff share with young people their monthly achievements and areas in need of development while gaining their views and comments about their progress. They are encouraged to attend and engage in all of their reviews and meetings. If they choose not to attend, staff gather their views and share them at the meeting.

Young people are well cared for and supported in the home, and staff have good knowledge and insight into each young person's needs. Pen portraits and the 'All About Me' documents provide thorough descriptions of young people's likes, dislikes, favourite clothes, activities and other key information the young people feel is important to them. Support plans alongside other documents provide clarity and practical advice and guidance to staff, informing them how to meet need.

Contact plans detail the contact arrangements and staff support required to facilitate it. Reviews are requested when needed and required, with discussion taking place at the network meeting. Staff support young people when plans change, working through any emotions and worry attached to these.

Staff celebrate and reward young people’s achievements with a variety of rewards and treats being offered. Young people set themselves goals to reach, and have achieved a great deal, with their achievements being celebrated and rewarded by staff.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Young people report feeling safe, and each has a key adult they trust and can confide in. They are sharing and exploring their worries and concerns with staff, learning strategies and ways to manage their feelings and emotions. This is having a positive impact on their emotional well-being, developing and improving their ability to self-regulate and manage situations.</p> <p>Staff maintain the home to a good standard, ensuring that it is safe and well presented. They address and identify aspects of risk that are quickly rectified.</p> <p>Staff have good knowledge and insight regarding safeguarding policy, procedure and risk factors. Staff apply a low-level threshold to reporting and recording concerns, with a swift response and action applied. Some concerns remain open with no outcome yet reached or evidenced.</p> <p>Young people know how to make a complaint and are vocal in raising their concerns with staff. They complete complaint and worry forms, sharing them with staff. Staff record, investigate and explore concerns, with young people provided with an outcome. Some concerns remain open, with young people waiting for an outcome to complaints raised.</p> <p>Systems within the home for recording and managing safeguarding concerns are very robust and meticulous. Staff act on concerns swiftly with substantial investigation and exploration. Concerns are reported and referred to others when required. The evidence trail from instigation through investigation to completion is maintained within the home. This has allowed the manager to apply oversight and monitoring of incidents. Concerns remain open until specific tasks identified are</p>	

completed and signed off. Some concerns have remained open for significant periods with no outcome recorded or provided to the young person. The safeguarding lead provides another level of scrutiny. Allegations are reported and referred as per the home's policy and procedure. One concern was not referred, and the evidence to show the rationale for decision-making is lacking.

Staff apply a robust coordinated approach to episodes of missing from care. There has been one episode of missing since the last inspection. The young person was welcomed on return and a request was made for a return to care interview.

Risks associated with child sexual exploitation are assessed, and plans detail how to minimise and reduce risk factors. Staff provide good-quality education and information in one-to-one sessions, promoting young people's ability to make informed decisions about engaging in risk-taking behaviours.

Staff follow detailed behaviour support plans with all staff trained in the home's preferred approach. Staff avoid the use of physical intervention. One incident required this being used in its lowest form for the shortest period. Staff provide a positive role model and promote positive approaches to behaviour management.

Staff give many more rewards than sanctions. They celebrate young people's achievements and positive behaviour by offering a wide variety of treats, trips out and rewards. Sanctions are restorative in nature, linked to the trigger or cause. Currently the log does not allow for young people's views and comments to be recorded.

The safer recruitment process has robust systems in place, but some records viewed lacked evidence that employment gaps were explored and verified.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The manager is currently applying to Ofsted to become the registered manager for the home. She has undertaken her level 5 diploma. The home's manager is managing the home effectively, with daily input from the responsible individual. The application process has been ongoing for several months. It is hoped that all issues are now clarified and near completion.</p>	

Staff in the home are positive and work well as a team, providing consistency of approach to young people. Staff report feeling well supported by the house manager and leaders in the organisation.

Managers usually complete detailed pre-admission assessments, with plans addressing how to meet need and minimise risk. Managers had not followed a clear process and procedure for one admission to the home. The assessment occurred on the day of admission. Staff and young people were not prepared for the imminent admission. Managers do not have a clear policy and process to follow prior to admission to the home. They do not evidence that they have welcomed young people to the home and talked to them about the information within the 'young person's guide'.

The home has a staff vacancy. A recent recruitment drive has been successful, with new staff in post. The ongoing recruitment drive is addressing the staff vacancy. Staff complete an induction process over a six-month period, which is robust and effective, with staff developing and building on knowledge and skills. Staff have regular supervision during induction.

Staff are provided with regular effective supervision and appraisal of their practice at least once a year. They access a varied programme of training which is specific to their role. Staff are enrolled on, or have achieved, the required qualification. Two members of staff have not yet achieved this in line with regulation.

The manager has developed effective relationships with others outside of the home. She has challenged and advocated on behalf of those at the home when required.

The manager's monitoring checks of the home follow a new system. The process of signing of aspects of the plan is completed and detailed on the plan. It explores and reviews all aspects of the home and the care it provides. The independent visitor has visited the home and provided an additional layer of scrutiny, with the manager acting on aspects identified. The manager does not have contingencies in place to address tasks if staff are absent. The home's development plan states what they wish to achieve, but it has not been reviewed or updated.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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