

SC371073

Registered provider: Livability

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 16 children and young people. It offers a short-break service and a residential provision to children and young people up to the age of 19 who may have physical disabilities and associated complex learning and care needs. The home is operated by an organisation with charitable status.

The home is registered as a non-maintained residential special school, but is regulated against the children's home regulations as it provides 52 weeks per year placements.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 December 2017

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: 4 October 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff have very good relationships with the young people they care for. They treat them with respect and dignity.
- The registered manager is very good advocate for young people when she feels that young people and/or their families are not being provided with the support they need.
- Healthcare arrangements are good and ensure that young people's healthcare needs are well met.
- The registered manager and the staff team are aspirational for the young people and themselves.
- The process for young people moving into the home is excellent. This ensures that young people and their families feel confident about the move and settle quickly.
- Staff development and training is a strength of this home. Young people are cared for by a well-trained team that understands them and knows how to meet their needs.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Ensure that all staff receive good-quality supervision and that follow-up actions from these sessions are documented and reviewed.
- Remove as many of the health and safety signs around the home as possible. These detract from the comfortable, homely environment that staff are trying to provide for young people.
- Ensure that records of applicant's interviews include an explanation of the scoring system used as well as the decision to appoint or not.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Requires improvement
18/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
25/06/2015	Full	Requires improvement
20/11/2014	Interim	Sustained 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>Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))</p> <p>In particular, that records of supervision contain clear evidence of whether actions have been met</p>	28/02/2018

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. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, any unnecessary health and safety signs around the home must be removed.
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 3.1)

In particular, records of applicant’s interviews need to contain an explanation of the scoring system and the decision whether to appoint or not.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people receive good-quality care from a dedicated team. Interactions between staff and young people were seen during the inspection and were very good. There was a lot of laughter and fun.

The quality of young people's day-to-day experiences is very good. Young people get to take part in a range of activities, both at the home and in the community. They have taken part in outward bound courses, local radio and music production.

Parents were very complimentary about the home. Parents said, 'It's really great,' 'It's exactly what we wanted,' 'Staff really love my child,' and 'This place is by far the best.' Parents said that they felt confident leaving their child with the staff. One parent said that although their child has medical needs, they were so pleased that their child has a care plan and not a medical plan as had been their experience before. Parents praised the team for how well they care for their children and the support that the team gives to them.

The home provides young people with excellent medical and healthcare. The administration, storage and recording of medications are very good. The systems in place ensure that young people receive their medication when they need it and how they like to take it.

Young people at the home require personal and intimate care. Staff do this with great respect and ensure that young people are treated with dignity. Young people are given control over who provides their personal care.

Staff manage young people moving into the home very well. The form this takes is dependent upon the young people. Recently, a core team of staff spent time with a young person at their previous home to get to know them, understand their needs and how to meet these. This resulted in the young person settling into the home very quickly.

Staff understand the young people's methods of communication. During the inspection, a young person who uses the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) symbols showed interest in another young person's communication book. Staff were so excited about this, not only because the young person initiated this but also they were using it to express an emotion for the very first time.

Staff ensure that the home provides young people with all of the specialist equipment they need. Both kitchens have work surfaces that go up and down so that all young people can get involved. Young people also have access to a range of specialist services on site. These include occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy.

Young people's rooms are comfortable and personalised. Some have audio and visual monitors for health reasons. There is ample communal space for young people to enjoy. The registered manager and staff are in the process of developing a sensory lounge rather than a sensory room. They are looking at how they are able to provide stimulation via smells and sounds as well as lights and textures.

Young people's files are well maintained and contain all the required information. Despite the young people having significant medical needs, the plans are care-based and not medicalised.

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

Safeguarding processes at the home are clear and followed in day-to-day practice. This protects the young people. Staff interviewed had a good understanding of the safeguarding systems, their duty of care and the additional vulnerabilities of the young people that they care for. Where there have been safeguarding concerns, these have been swiftly and appropriately dealt with. The registered manager shares information with external professionals, including Ofsted.

The manager evaluates the work that has been undertaken following each incident and where any lessons to be learned are identified these are acted upon. During her safeguarding work, the registered manager has built up good and effective working relations with the police and the designated officer.

Good recruitment practices are in place which protect young people from those who may wish to harm them. Currently there is no explanation of the scoring system used at interviews and how this relates to the decision to appoint or not. All agency staff are checked to the same degree as substantive staff. The registered manager carries out audits of personnel files for agency staff to ensure that this is the case.

Young people live in a safe environment. Staff and visitors are not permitted to use their mobile phones on site to protect the privacy and safety of the young people.

Risk assessments, maintained by the staff, are excellent. They clearly identify the level of risk and what actions should be taken to reduce or eliminate this risk. These are frequently reviewed and where needed updated to ensure that they remain current.

Since the last inspection, no young person has been restrained. The staff team focuses on knowing the young people well, knowing each young person's triggers and being proactive rather than reacting to situations. Where needed, young people have a behaviour management plan which is kept under review.

Staff help young people where possible to learn about keeping themselves safe. Young people are helped to understand their own vulnerabilities and self-protection skills. An example of this is work that is being done with regard to online safety.

Each young person has a personal fire evacuation plan which details what help they will need in the event of a fire. Staff ensure that all equipment which young people use is regularly checked and still meets their needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last full inspection, a new registered manager has been appointed. She is appropriately qualified and experienced for the role. The registered manager has a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the home and is working with the team to address these.

The registered manager has a clear vision for the home, which includes having high aspirations for the young people, the staff and herself. She advocates for young people when she feels that decisions made are not in their best interest or the interests of their families. The staff team sees it as a key part of their role to advocate for the young people they care for and ensure that they receive the best possible care and service.

Currently, staff are receiving regular supervision but the records of these sessions vary in quality. Some lack evidence of follow-up actions being clearly set and then reviewed at the next session. This had already been noticed by the registered manager and plans are in place to address this. However, these are yet to be embedded in practice.

The staff prioritise the young people's well-being. They are very cohesive as a team, which provides a good atmosphere where young people can thrive. The members of the staff team are well trained and receive any additional training needed to meet young people's needs. A good example of this is where a core number of the team received specific training on a young person's medical needs prior to that young person moving into the home. Currently, only this core team is working with this young person while other staff are trained.

The registered manager sees the development of the team as key, as they are her best resource. At team meetings, they discuss the Quality Standards and Regulations so that staff increase their knowledge of these but also how they meet them as a team. The manager has also recently attended Ofsted provider events and taken information from these back to the team. In addition, the registered manager has set projects for each member of staff, which involves them carrying out research and then presenting this to the rest of the team. One example is resources to be used with young people to keep themselves safe online.

At the time of this inspection, there were some staff vacancies. The registered manager has covered these by additional shifts herself and the use of a small number of agency staff.

Consultation with young people is given a high profile. Staff seek young people's views on all aspects of their care and their plans. This helps them to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.

The team welcomes feedback from parents or external professionals on the work they are doing. They see this as means to help them improve, which in turn improves things for the young people. Social workers said that they are very impressed by the staff team and the care they provide, not only to the young people but to their families as well.

The staff team has worked hard to make the home appear welcoming and comfortable despite the equipment that some young people need, such as hoists. However, there are a large number of health and safety signs around the home which detract from their efforts to make it more homely.

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: SC371073

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Livability

Registered provider address: 6 Mitre Passage, London SE10 0ER

Responsible individual: Robert Townsend

Registered manager: Rhiannon Beer

Inspectors

Wendy Anderson, social care inspector

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