

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC444869
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	Hopedale Children and Family Services Limited
Registered person address	Hopedale House, Wall Lane Terrace, Cheddleton, LEEK, Staffordshire, ST13 7ED

Responsible individual	Amy Hopkin
Registered manager	Sarah Deaville
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	10/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC444869

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people with very complex needs thrive in this safe and secure environment, making and sustaining significant progress beyond expectations.
- Young people enjoy warm and trusting relationships with highly committed and experienced staff who understand and effectively meet their needs.
- Enthusiastic staff enable young people to engage fully in education and to achieve.
- Young people have fun in a wide range of activities and excel in sports.
- A range of therapeutic services successfully engages young people to develop their ability to manage their own emotions and behaviour.
- Staff are innovative in monitoring young people's progress to ensure their placement plan targets are met.
- A strong and child focused registered manager leads a highly committed staff team.
- The registered manager is tenacious in identifying and exploring any gaps in staff knowledge, designing her own competency framework and providing additional training and support where necessary.
- The staff and registered manager are creative in engaging with young people, families and professionals, and use their feedback to drive up the quality of service.
- A local authority virtual school consults with the registered manager, to gain insight into this highly effective service and identify how other services can capture and replicate this success.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately-owned children's home provides care for up to fifteen children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home has its own school, which is registered with the Department for Education. The school is on site and all of the young people attend.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
26/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
05/06/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>outstanding</p>
<p>Young people express that they love living here and feel at home in the comfortable welcoming surroundings. They take great pride in their personalised bedrooms. Young people feel highly valued by nurturing staff who ensure that their achievements are celebrated. Staff provide young people with firm boundaries, which provide them with a sense of security and stability. This supports their emotional well-being and their social development.</p> <p>Young people, who have struggled to form positive relationships in the past, have fun with staff and each other and engage in a wide range of enjoyable and stimulating activities such as sport, cooking, art and music. There are photographs in the home of the annual holiday abroad, which illustrate the warm relationships that young people share with sensitive and dedicated staff.</p> <p>Young people sit and eat together with staff after school in a dining room that is full of chatter and social interaction. There is a strong sense of community and a calm and safe atmosphere. In the evenings, enthusiastic staff support young people to attend family contact, local clubs, cook, or just play on the computer or watch television to relax. One young person peruses his interest in interior design and likes to make decorative items for his room.</p> <p>Young people make significant and sustained progress in all areas of development including education, social skills, emotional well-being and managing their own behaviour. Many successfully establish positive family contact, achievements in sport and independence skills. All develop good manners and confidence. They engage in school with 100% attendance. One young person's rugby club has recently made him team captain, and he and the staff are thrilled by this achievement. Some young people have just produced an informative, child focused and welcoming video which tours the home and introduces the staff. This is part of a creative and exciting children's guide for young people to watch before they come here.</p> <p>One young person said, 'I am very happy here and have lots of fun. The staff ask me my views all the time and always listen to me, always'.</p> <p>Young people's emotional development and well-being is central to their ability to engage and progress. They each have complimentary therapy once a week, providing them with important one to one attention.</p>	

When young people become distressed or feel sad, they can access support in 'the Igloo', which is a safe and quiet room that young people have decorated to their own tastes. Consequently, young people are often able to address their feelings and then continue with their day as planned.

Therapists hold formal therapy sessions after the school day and young people can have a staff member in therapy with them if they want. Extremely skilled and professional staff also undertake important life story work with young people.

Young people understand their own progress here and one young person commented: 'I don't recognise myself now. I am so grown up. I am now loads more confident. The staff do not give up on you, If you are working towards something; the staff will not stop until you reach your goal.'

The social worker for one young person commented that: 'He has made massive progress. He didn't engage in education before he came here and had restraints every day. He is very confident now, and engages in therapy. He shows empathy and has begun to share with another young people'. One parents said, 'It's the best place he's ever been in'. He loves it and calls it his home. He gets on with all staff, like family.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
<p>Recruitment is safe. Staff are confident in their safeguarding training and, for example, know how to raise concerns about adults working with children. They are highly trained in child sexual exploitation, having undertaken training with the local police in addition to their in-house training. All mandatory training is up to date and addressed restraint, medication and radicalisation.</p> <p>Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable in how to effectively de-escalate situations. One Independent reviewing officer stated that, 'Risk is identified and really well managed'.</p> <p>Effective routines and boundaries in the home and a very strong ethos around nurturing support young people to learn to manage their own behaviour. This reduces the risk of violent incidents and self-harm and going missing. Young people benefit from the innovation of a 'safe space room' where staff can take them to calm down and reflect if they are distressed. This open space enables them to safely self-regulate their emotions.</p>	

Young people are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe. Staff routinely include young people in discussions about their behaviour. They actively encourage them to suggest ways to identify risk and manage their own behaviour. Young people enthusiastically engage in these conversations, which allow them to take responsibility and problem solve.

The registered manager regularly reviews medication and only shift leaders or seniors who have no children allocated to them at that time, administer medication to young people. Maintenance of the building is good and health and safety, fire checks and fire drills are up to date.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
<p>The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has many years' experience of working with children and young people in residential care and education.</p> <p>Since the last inspection, the home has increased its capacity to care for fifteen young people.</p> <p>The registered manager responded proactively to the requirements made at the last full inspection, ensuring that a robust and safe staff recruitment system is in place and is effective. The last interim inspection judged the home as having improved effectiveness and the registered manager has supported and enabled her staff to achieve an outstanding level of service to young people.</p> <p>The registered manager's excellent leadership and management provides staff with a strong child focus and clear aims to make a real difference to the lives of young people in their care. Staff work as a cohesive and highly effective team, which understands the ethos of the home.</p> <p>A staff member said: ' Our ethos is to make this as close to a family environment as we can. Whoever comes, they say wow, this is like a home. It feels like a home, looks like a home, that is what we aim for every day. Sitting down having tea together'.</p> <p>One Independent reviewing officer stated that, 'Leadership very good. There is a clarity of vision from the top down and that permeates through the team'.</p>	

Staff recently highlighted the effectiveness of the management and leadership by their ability to maintain a very high standard of service, when the registered manager took a lengthy period of pre-planned leave.

Staff provide a consistent, reliable and effective service for young people. The social worker for one young person commented that staff, 'do what they say they will. They are very enthusiastic and child focused, constantly making improvements. They did everything to advocate for the young person'.

Staff state that the training they receive is excellent. The innovative and forward thinking registered manager has developed a competency framework to support staff learning. This cross-references to the content of the level 3 diploma and provides staff with evidence that they can use of their diplomas. The framework engages staff in questions, answers and observations about policies and practice and the registered manager uses it in supervision and mentoring sessions. This ensures that staff constantly have to think about and reflect on their practice. It also prepares them for a wide range of scenarios, such as when to use a physical intervention. The registered manager also uses the framework to identify learning needs and gaps, which she addresses with a range of training opportunities.

The registered manager has also designed an 'Outcomes for children' chart, which records young people's progress in a visual way that can be understood by young people and easily conveyed to professionals and family. This innovation assists staff to see where progress is being made and where key work with young people can be most effectively targeted. For example, young people may aim to improve personal hygiene or manage their responses to an adult telling them what to do, and as they make progress, their targets can be increased or changed.

Communication is a key element in the success of this service. Staff engage young people in conversations about the aims of the home. They are included in decisions about their care and behaviour. Staff have a 'coffee and chat' with young people to find out how they are feeling and ask then what they would like to happen in their lives.

The registered manager incorporates feedback from professionals, young people, staff and family in her quality of care reviews. She produces detailed action plans, which she and the staff complete in order to drive up standards of care.

Written information is clear, organised and accessible to staff, enabling them to understand and meet young people needs. Staff regularly review and update young people's plans. The registered manager, therapy co-ordinator and therapists review the therapy plans for young people together on a regular basis.

Each new referral is subject to a thorough impact assessment and young people are only placed if staff feel confident that the service has the skills and experience to meet their needs. If a young person's needs are not being met by the

placement, staff will very quickly identify this and work with the placing authority to find an appropriate placement. The registered manager and staff challenge other professionals who are not meeting young people's needs.

Testament to the high regard in which this service is held, is a recent request from a local authority virtual school for the registered manager and staff to share their model of working with young people and explore how and why it is so effective.

The virtual head stated: 'The team works in a joined-up and consistent way. They have positive regard for children with clear boundaries and expectations within a very warm nurturing environment. Children normalise to this pattern, as it is consistent and genuine. Our young people have made phenomenal progress there... what they do is superb'.

There is a strong sense that staff and young people are passionate about the work that is undertaken. One young person jumped up from the dinner table, unprompted, to say, 'if you want to send someone somewhere, send them here because it's the best!'

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*.

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 looked after children 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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