

SC488961

Registered provider: Barford Children's Services Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, operated by a private provider, is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 29 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Good

Date of last inspection: 8 May 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Children are making good progress as a result of the consistent care and support that staff provide. A child's social worker said: 'The staff are doing a great job. I am very happy with the way they are looking after him.' The home provides a nurturing and child-focused base from which children begin to settle, form positive attachments and start to address their previous experiences. One child said: 'I like it here. It's a nice house, the food is nice and I like the staff.' Children are able to identify the progress they have made. For example, one child said: 'My anger is not as bad. I now talk about my problems. I've also got better with my school work.'

One child has been admitted to the home since the last inspection and no one has left. The manager has improved the admissions process and takes matching very seriously.

He always visits children in their current placement before they move to this home. This provides the child with the opportunity to ask questions, receive written information about the home and meet the manager in person. As a result, the child is more likely to settle and feel less anxious about their move. The manager always ensures that he receives enough information about the child so that he can assess whether the home can meet their needs as well as continuing to meet the needs of the other children in placement. One child is about to leave the home in a very planned and positive way. This move is possible because of the progress he has made during his time at the home.

All the children attend the company's school and have improved their attendance over time. For one child, at 96.2%, this is better than the national average. The children are engaging better and benefiting from positive educational experiences. One child's reading age has increased significantly and children are becoming proud of their achievements. A child's social worker said: 'He is now attending school, his behaviour is much better, he is engaging and respecting teachers. That is a big deal.'

Children have positive experiences. They are encouraged to pursue their leisure interests in the community. For example, one child enjoys rap music and has a weekly session that he really enjoys. Other children go to the cinema, play pool and enjoy ice-skating. Staff are also very good at ensuring that the children maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Staff facilitate and supervise contact arrangements with family members, some of which are at a considerable distance from the home. A child's social worker commented: 'Staff are very instrumental in making sure links are maintained with the family. They understand the emotions and the links.'

Since the last full inspection, there have been very few notifications, no children have been missing from care, and incidents of physical intervention have been rare. However, although the record of the physical intervention states that staff and children have been offered the opportunity to discuss the incident, on some occasions there is no report of their views. These views form an important part of the monitoring and evaluation process in order to identify any learning points, and should therefore be encouraged. Children say they feel able to make a complaint and that staff listen to them and take them seriously. The small number of complaints that have been made have been resolved satisfactorily.

The responsible individual has strengthened her monitoring of the service by providing more individual support to the registered manager. She is undertaking monthly audits to identify where further improvements can be made. This practice, in conjunction with the information from the independent visitor reports, provides the responsible individual with a comprehensive overview and insight into how the home is functioning. In addition, the manager has introduced clearer guidance for staff in relation to their daily and weekly responsibilities and key-working roles. This is effective in improving monitoring systems as well as accountability.

Partnership working is good and provides a strong base to support improving outcomes for the children. The headteacher said: 'There is good communication and staff are proactive in seeking meetings.' Regular handovers and joint working ensure that children

benefit from a consistent response to their behaviour. Children’s social workers are positive about the communication. One social worker described it as ‘fantastic’. The staff have regular consultations with the company’s therapists. This provides staff with time for reflection and suggestions for alternative strategies. Regular multidisciplinary care planning meetings held at the home ensure that all the professionals involved in a child’s life know what is going on and have an agreed strategy to address any issues.

One recommendation to improve practice was made at the last inspection. This related to the details of staff training in the workforce plan. The information about staff training is now up to date and this recommendation has therefore been addressed. There have been further improvements to the service since the last inspection. New staff have been appointed and there is now only one vacancy in the staff team.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 08/05/2017 | Full | Good |
| 07/11/2016 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 12/04/2016 | Full | Requires improvement |

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: SC488961

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barford Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Old Coach House, Drinsey Nook, Lincoln LN1 2JJ

Responsible individual: Emma Carrington

Registered manager: Luke Taylor

Inspector

Ros Chapman, social care inspector

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