

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12 July 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC035409</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Secure unit</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Northumberland County Council</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Northumberland County Council, County Hall MORPETH, Northumberland NE61 2EF</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Daljit Lally</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Julie Tinkler</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Shaun Common</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12 July 2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Improved effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>Outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>	<b>Good</b>

## SC035409

### Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- There are high-quality relationships between staff and young people. Staff are excellent role models for young people. They provide good support and guidance and encourage positive social skills and behaviour, which form the foundations for the good-quality individualised work undertaken.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in education is good with some outstanding aspects. This leads to good progress by young people in improving their knowledge of English and mathematics and achieving their agreed learning goals.
- Healthcare, including mental healthcare, is of a good quality, ensuring that young people's needs are assessed, planned for and met.
- Good-quality work is undertaken to help, guide and support young people to make progress and return to community living.
- A stable, knowledgeable and well-led staff team is supported by managers who have high aspirations for young people.
- Recording systems are satisfactory in most areas, but weak in others. Internal and external monitoring systems require improvement.
- Management of change in education is poor with key decisions being made and enacted without defined, specific impact measures to gauge their success. Contingency planning for staff absence in education needs to improve.

## What does the children's home need to do to 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 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>6. (1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</li> <li>(b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</li> </ul> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</li> <li>(b) ensure that staff—</li> <li>(ii) protect and promote each child's welfare.</li> </ul> <p>Specifically, ensure that there are measures in place, that are monitored by managers, to provide appropriate privacy to young people in their bedrooms and while using their en-suite facilities.</p>	31/08/2016
<p>12. (1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) that staff—</li> <li>(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</li> <li>(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</li> <li>(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;</li> <li>(e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</li> </ul> <p>Specifically, ensure that there is a policy, procedure and process</p>	31/08/2016

(which may be added to the home's existing child protection or self-harm policies and procedures) that sets out how and when ligature cutters are checked periodically and after any use, and verified as fit for purpose.	
Ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the matters set out in the regulation. This relates specifically to single separation and behaviour management plans. (Regulation 35)	16/09/2016
<p>Maintain the system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>(a) the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>(b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>(c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that monitoring is robust in identifying shortfalls and actions taken, in records such as physical restraint, enquiries and investigations, single separation, behaviour management plans, staff training, complaints, challenging local authorities about their responsibilities in transition planning for young people and team meeting minutes. (Regulation 45(2)(a–c))</p>	16/09/2016
<p>13. (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>(b) promotes their welfare</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that robust records are kept that detail the up-to-date training each staff member has undertaken.</p>	16/09/2016
Ensure that the independent person's reports about visits set out the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and that the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being and recommends actions and timescales. Specifically, that the independent person is rigorous in identifying shortfalls in records and practice pertaining to young people's safety and wellbeing, reports on these matters and makes time-scaled recommendations for action. (Regulation 44)	16/09/2016

<p>8. (1) The education standard is that children make measureable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans.</p> <p>Specifically, ensure as a matter of urgency that learning is given a high priority and that all young people attend their education activities regularly and punctually – this to be evidenced in summaries of ‘all population’ year-to-date and individual young people’s attendance.</p>	<p>30/11/16</p>
<p>8. (1) The education standard is that children make measureable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(i) help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans.</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that all young people access broad and balanced learning programmes that clearly link to their education, health and care plans and long-term aspirations – to be evidenced in completed education, health and care plans and personal education plans for each young person; and</p> <p>Plan a range of mobility activities that clearly support the educational needs of all young people – to be evidenced in the recorded learning objectives for each activity and the assessment of their completion during progress reviews.</p>	<p>30/11/16</p>

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Young people must be consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Specifically, improve the quality and consistency of records made of young people’s meetings, to demonstrate clearly the actions taken by staff following issues raised by young people. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations

including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, that records accurately reflect when key discussions have taken place in staff team meetings and records are kept when members of staff have contacted placing authorities regarding transition plans for the young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, analyse data effectively to accurately monitor progress with young people's learning and identify trends in performance over time for all groups of young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, develop contingency plans to ensure that staff absence in education does not interrupt learning activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on-site in dedicated facilities.

This inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability for this provision to operate as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2014	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2014	Full	Good
21/01/2014	Interim	Good progress
18/07/2013	Full	Good



## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Overall, young people make good progress. The multi-agency resources available, coupled with the skills of staff on-site, provide for timely initial assessments on admission. As a result, identification of physical and mental health needs, along with the collection and collation of other information, enables detailed, personalised plans and risk assessments to be developed.</p> <p>For many young people who arrive at the home in crisis, the experience of living here can turn their lives around. One young person summed up the feelings of a number of others when saying, 'This place has been great for me. It's helped me think about what I was doing before I came here, which was not good.' This was endorsed during a discussion held between an inspector and parents, who said, 'This has been the best thing that could have happened to her. The staff have been great. The work on a whole range of issues has made her think about the life she was living before she came here.'</p> <p>A real strength of the home is the quality of relationships that staff are able to build with young people. Relationships are strong and often long-lasting, with a number of young people choosing to maintain contact with the home long after they leave. The strength of the relationships forms the foundations for the individualised work undertaken. Relationships are strong enough to come through difficult periods as staff work with young people in a systematic and non-judgemental way. As a result, young people are more likely to confront the issues which led to them being placed in secure accommodation. This in turn leads them to make significant changes to their previous lifestyles.</p> <p>The quality of work undertaken with young people is recognised positively by others. For example, a social worker stated that 'One of the home's strengths is the quality of the relationships they form with young people.' The parents of a young person told an inspector, 'They have kept her safe and helped her to change some of her views.' A team manager from a placing authority commented, '[Name of home] is one of my go-to providers. I always feel confident when working with them. I recommend the placement to others.'</p> <p>Identifying need, developing plans, case management and working towards transition are areas that are well coordinated. Young people benefit from receiving a multi-agency approach to their care. A team manager commented, 'They are very receptive to joint working programmes'. Young people confirm that they are consulted and have input into their plans, giving them a sense of ownership as</p>	

they participate in decision-making processes.

Consultation is very good. Feedback from young people is positive, with an appreciation that they can influence aspects of daily life. For example, during the inspection, a group participated in the recruitment of new staff. Others described how they felt that they had been listened to when consulted about the development of a new recreational area. Weekly meetings take place on the two living units. These are recorded, although the quality of the minutes lacks consistency from one unit to the other. For example, records from one meeting clearly evidence how staff have responded to suggestions made by young people. This is not reflected in the records of meetings held on the second unit, which are brief and contain little evidence of any positive response to suggestions made by young people. An independent advocate visits and meets with young people regularly, which provides another method of sharing views, receiving support and raising any concerns. Advocates are given unrestricted access, which allows them to move around unaided and see young people without staff present.

Young people's health needs are identified and met. Health assessments are completed shortly after admission. This allows for health plans to be developed to meet need. The arrangements to promote young people's health are good. A range of health professionals address young people's physical and mental health needs. They are supported by external agencies that provide drug, alcohol and sexual health services. By the time young people leave the home, a comprehensive health audit has been completed which transfers with the young person to their next placement. Health promotion is given a high priority. For example, activity programmes factor in fitness. Recently, the catering manager attended young people's meetings to look at and discuss the menu, with healthy eating in mind when options were explored and choices made. Overall, the young people's physical, mental and emotional health needs are being well met.

The young people have positive day-to-day experiences; for example, by participating in a range of activities that support existing interests, or provide new ones. The active mobility programme supports community-based experiences that are both recreational and educational.

Staff advocate strongly for young people, for example in challenging placing authorities about appropriate planning. Regular reviews and updating of plans, coupled with the transition and mobility plans agreed with placing authorities, open up a route towards discharge from the home that young people can understand and prepare for. For example, during a meeting observed during the inspection, staff and a young person's placing authority were able to agree the mobility and transition plans that took the young person up to their discharge date.

The building is secure and in a good state of repair. Young people are relaxed and at ease in their environment. Bedrooms are well decorated and personalised. Communal areas are warm and friendly, creating a homely atmosphere. A new

communal area, designed with input from the young people, has just opened, creating extra space and adding more facilities for young people to enjoy.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Young people feel safe. They told inspectors that they can talk to someone if they are worried about anything. During the inspection, the home received accreditation for their work on anti-bullying. This included providing a range of evidence about promoting anti-bullying and work undertaken directly with young people to provide a safer environment. Young people did not report any concerns about bullying, and high staff ratios, good staff awareness of risks and close supervision of young people were observed throughout the inspection. Recording of a recent incident shows work carried out with young people to address concerns, provide support and educate and guide the perpetrator and the victims, and showed how the matter was constructively resolved.</p> <p>Security and safety are taken very seriously and managed well. There are robust systems in place to check that the building is operationally sound and fit for purpose. The privacy and dignity of young people is promoted. One area that did not have an impact on young people's care was noted at inspection. Young people's bedroom doors were not locked when they use their en-suite facilities in their bedrooms. Young people were not concerned by this and staff closely supervise all young people in communal areas. There is the potential for a young person's privacy to be compromised should another young person choose to open a bedroom door or staff enter in error. The manager took immediate action to ensure that staff were instructed to lock bedroom doors when en-suites are being used or young people require privacy.</p> <p>At the time of the inspection, no young people were assessed as being at risk of self-harm. There are well-established processes and procedures for assessing vulnerability on admission and putting in place risk assessments and plans that staff know, understand and can then implement to help keep young people safe. Ligature cutters are stored securely in an appropriate place for use by staff when needed. There is no formal system to ensure they are periodically checked, or checked after any use so that they remain suitable for the purpose intended.</p> <p>There have been no child protection concerns since the last inspection. There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the designated officer. The line manager for the designated officer stated that the home has a positive working relationship with them and managers are clear when to make contact or who to access for advice. The designated officer chairs a quarterly meeting that includes the registered manager, where they examine any incidents and share information. The registered manager reports annually to the LSCB about</p>	

restraint practices. The LSCB do not directly assess restraint practices as part of their formal review as set out in 'Working together to safeguard children 2015'.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities should a young person abscond and the home has an up-to-date protocol devised by the local authority and local police force. There have been three incidents of absconding while young people were on planned/approved mobility since the last full inspection. In all three cases, clear records are available that show policy and procedure were followed to promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Inspectors observed that staff are excellent role models for young people. They provide good support and guidance and encourage positive social skills and behaviour. There is an incentive scheme that young people know, understand and engage well with. The scheme has levels that go from band one to star band. Young people earn points for good behaviour and progress through the levels, attaining rewards and privileges that provide encouragement to achieve and progress further.

Sanctions are used when the behaviour of young people is negative and has an effect on others. Sanctions are appropriate, well recorded, relevant to the misdemeanour and used creatively and constructively. Restorative practice is considered alongside any sanction so that young people are helped to understand the impact that negative behaviour has on others, and they are encouraged to put right what they have done wrong.

Physical restraint is used appropriately and, for the most part, in line with regulations. Staff are trained in the home's methods. The home, as verified by the registered manager, does not use pain compliance techniques. Staff are trained in 'breakaway/release' methods, some of which could involve pain infliction. The manager explained that these have never been used and are taught to staff for use when there is risk of serious injury or circumstances that are life-threatening and there is no alternative. The home's records indicate a significant reduction in physical restraint incidents for the period April 2015 to March 2016 in comparison with April 2014 to March 2015. Managers and staff attribute this to stability in staffing along with a skilled, knowledgeable and competent workforce that understands young people's needs. Managers, along with a manager in the local authority who does not work at the home, scrutinise every physical restraint incident. They look at records and use closed-circuit television. Good practice is highlighted in recording of monitoring and shared, as are any areas where improvement and learning is needed. One incident involved staff using physical intervention to gain a young person's compliance with requests. As per the process outlined above, managers identified this quickly and took a range of actions to ensure that this was robustly addressed. Formal processes were undertaken. These included briefings to all staff in team meetings about legislation and policy, re-training of all staff and an apology was provided to the young person involved. Records of these follow-up actions were made, but in some cases were not as clear

as they could be.

Single separation is used appropriately and in line with government guidance. The home's data indicates that the use of single separation has seen a significant reduction in its use for the period April 2015 to March 2016 in comparison with April 2014 to March 2015. Records clearly define the length of any incident, reason for use and a manager's authorisation. Records do not always clearly demonstrate in sufficient detail that the criteria for single separation continue to be met during an incident.

Behaviour management plans, defined by the Secure Accommodation Network (SAN) as 'managing away', are not used often and are used appropriately. This behaviour management approach involves managing young people away from their peers due to risks to self, others or significant damage to property. Records lack the details required by regulation, such as location and sufficient detail that the criteria for ongoing use continue to be met during an incident.

The home has procedures for any searches. A risk-led approach is used with young people when there is an identified safety or security matter. Policy and procedure defines four levels. Level 1 is a young person turning out their pockets, level 2 is the use of an electronic wand and level 3 is when young people remove their clothes in privacy and put on a dressing gown. Clothes are searched and returned. The majority of searches are level 1 and 2, with level 3 only used where there are serious concerns. Level 3 searches have to be authorised by a manager. All searches are clearly recorded.

All staff have undertaken training in awareness of radicalisation and understand their roles and responsibilities. The registered manager has a good understanding of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the government's 'Prevent' duty guidance. The manager has a direct link in the local authority to a manager with responsibility for coordinating and liaising with the regional police counter-terrorism team when required.

Ten staff have been recruited since the last full inspection. Checks carried out and clearly recorded demonstrate that safe recruitment procedures are followed that help to ensure that the right people are employed to work with vulnerable children.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The registered manager has over 17 years of experience in working with young people. She has been registered with Ofsted for almost two years and has suitable qualifications to perform her role.	

The registered manager has provided strong leadership and stability to the staff team throughout a period of restructuring and change. The staff team is now more settled and this stability has ensured that confidence and consistency in practice have improved.

There are good staffing levels to ensure that the young people receive the support and supervision that they need in order to make good progress and to feel safe. New staff receive a wide range of training and this ensures that they have the skills and knowledge to work well with the young people. The auditing of staff training has not yet been completed and records do not clearly show whether all are up-to-date with certain key training; for example, training in awareness of child sexual exploitation. Therefore, it is possible that established members of staff have not had up-to-date training in key areas.

Staff speak positively about the levels of support that they receive both from their peers and their managers. All receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisals and this helps to ensure that they are skilled in the care of young people and continue to develop their practice. If shortfalls in performance are identified, action plans are put in place to enable staff to improve their practice and meet the professional standards required.

The systems to monitor the quality of care are not always consistently effective in identifying shortfalls. For example, a matter was not sufficiently investigated after an incident of physical restraint relating to a young person's health condition, though the impact of this was minimal. Records made of the enquiries and outcomes of actions taken in follow-up to physical restraint used by staff to secure a young person's compliance are weak. Managers were able to describe and discuss the actions they have taken, but records kept did not evidence this. Some measures of control records are inconsistent and lack robust detail. Additionally, a key area of practice discussed at a team meeting was not recorded in the minutes.

Young people are confident about using the complaints system. There is a new process in place which helps young people to understand the choices they can make if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint. Although complaints in the main are well recorded and well managed, one did not contain information about how it had been resolved, despite the young person signing to say that they were happy with the resolution. There is good evidence in place to show how one complaint from a young person had been upheld and had led to a change in practice in the home. This was very well recorded and showed that young people do have an effective role in the running of their home and that the staff team value their opinions and feelings. Shortfalls in this area related to recording practice.

External professionals give very good feedback about how well staff advocate for young people. On the whole, records support the efforts made by staff, but on one occasion the recording of how members of staff have advocated and challenged a

local authority about the efficacy of care planning was incomplete. Managers were able to describe and discuss the actions they were taking, but records kept did not evidence this action.

There is a clear statement of purpose which accurately describes the home's services. This means that placing authorities and stakeholders have information about what the home offers and provides.

Any significant incidents are shared promptly with the necessary agencies. This ensures that all relevant agencies are kept up-to-date and that the staff team is accountable and transparent in its practice.

External scrutiny is welcomed. Managers and staff are keen to hear feedback from stakeholders so that practice can be reviewed and improved if needed. There are monthly visits undertaken by an independent visitor as required by regulation and reports of such visits outline good practice and areas for improvement. In turn, managers have action plans that show how they will address or have addressed any matters. Shortfalls have not always been identified by the visitor. One incident of physical restraint was commented on by the visitor in their report, but the comments did not recognise that further investigation and recording were needed to demonstrate that appropriate actions had been taken about a young person's health and well-being. Recording shortfalls in some areas, for example in single separations, have not been identified by the visitor.

	Judgement grade
<b>Outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The outcomes for young people in education and related learning activities are good, especially in the development of personal behaviours and social skills. Young people typically achieve qualifications in English and mathematics at least one level higher than they had previously attained. A small number achieve GCSEs.</p> <p>Initial assessment of young people takes place soon after arrival and identifies their individual support needs. This helps young people to swiftly improve their English and mathematics skills. Staff complete an effective assessment of young people's wider educational needs and allocate them to appropriate courses.</p> <p>Most achieve their agreed planned learning goals, although these are not always sufficiently challenging. Young people make good progress given their often very low starting points. In 2014–15, young people made good progress relative to pupils in open schools, but less than those in other secure children's homes. Learners' work is of good quality. Young people make rapid progress in developing their personal and social skills, improving their self-esteem and emotional maturity.</p>	

The large majority of young people come to enjoy learning and understand the importance of achieving relevant qualifications.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good, with some outstanding aspects. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at identifying risk early, de-escalating challenging behaviour effectively, and successfully engage young people to maintain a positive learning environment. The best lessons challenge young people of all abilities to progress, and work is individualised to meet their needs. Teachers make good links within lessons to other subject areas to reinforce learning; for example, the sensitive discussion of topics in PHSE classes, such as sexual health, ensure that young people are safely encouraged to expand their understanding of keeping themselves safe and the need to respect others. Teachers promote equality and diversity very well and most young people demonstrate an excellent understanding of relevant topics. Care staff in classrooms support learning well.

The large majority of young people enjoy their learning, are interested and are engaged in lessons. Assessment is generally good, with sufficient feedback provided to young people on what they need to do to progress further. Teachers provide clear explanations to young people as to the level that they are working at and how this equates to GCSE grades, but they do not consistently refer to the employment-related skills developed. The headteacher carries out progress reviews each month with learners to identify both academic and personal development targets.

The education curriculum is narrower than at the time of the previous inspection. The advisory board and headteacher have given a high priority to the development of English and mathematics skills. The previously offered courses in art, modern and foreign languages and humanities have been discontinued. Accredited vocational qualifications in multi-media are well established and courses in catering have begun very recently. Accredited courses in carpentry are to commence if the local authority agrees the relevant risk assessments. Further vocational courses in engineering are planned. However, appropriate accommodation is yet to be provided. Physical education is part of the education timetable. Accommodation is excellent with good access to information learning technology, which teaching staff use well to enliven learning.

Enrichment activities are good, with many opportunities for young people to take part in a variety of leisure activities to extend their knowledge and understanding and help support their personal development. Teachers provide informal information, advice and guidance on next steps in learning and future employability.

Planned and approved trips into the community enable young people to attend local college open days and course interviews. Mobility activities are inadequately planned to support the educational needs of young people and do not specifically link to their needs and ambitions as described in individual education, health and



care plans (EHCP) and personal education plans (PEP).

Attendance is around 85% in the current academic year to date; however, according to available data, attendance dipped noticeably in the two months prior to this inspection. A few young people have a large number of authorised absences, which prevents their attendance at mandatory education.

Behaviour management in education is very effective. Education and care staff work very hard to offer a consistent, effective system of challenge and reward. Young people removed from education are managed back into learning quickly. Standards of behaviour are very high and a courteous, respectful relationship is in place between young people and education staff.

The management of education and related learning activities requires improvement. Members of the advisory board, the headteacher and senior teacher have all taken up post since 1 January 2016. In addition, a number of experienced and long-established teaching staff have retired and this has resulted in a considerable period of organisational and personnel change. The advisory board and headteacher have instigated a number of strategic and operational improvements, but it is too early to gauge the full impact of these actions.

The management of change has been poor. While teaching staff appreciate the value of many of the proposed improvements, consultation and communication about the introduction of these changes have been inadequate. Staff told inspectors that their suggestions on the effective implementation of planned improvements are not accepted. Key decisions are acted on very quickly without defined, specific impact measures to gauge their success.

Contingency planning for staff absence in education is not effective to ensure minimum disruption to learning activities.

Since the last inspection, a new data system has been introduced which records and monitors young people's progress. The new method of monitoring learners' progress measured against national curriculum sub-levels in English and mathematics needs to be reviewed to ensure that it provides an accurate view of the progress of each learner and identifies performance trends over time. There is limited use of summaries of data to monitor and report on key aspects of the provision, such as year-to-date attendance rates for the whole population as well as by each individual young person.

## 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 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 that 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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