

SC442401

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and/or physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 19 January 2018

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | Outstanding |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | Outstanding |
|---|-------------|

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 18 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people make exceptional progress across all areas of their development following admission to the home.
- Young people enjoy positive and respectful relationships with staff and also with each other.
- All young people are attending school or college and making good progress educationally.
- Young people engage in a range of leisure activities, which might be with other young people living in the home, or in the local community. This helps to keep young people fit and motivated, and improves their self-esteem.
- Feedback from other professionals involved with the home is unanimously positive. Many judge other children's homes by the high standards and practice that they observe at this home.
- Staff support young people to maintain meaningful relationships with their family members.
- The home is a warm and welcoming environment where young people enjoy spending their time.
- Staff support young people to make a planned transition into independence, and ensure that young people have the skills that they will need to manage on their own in life.
- Managers request regular feedback from young people, their family members and professionals who are involved in young people's lives, in order to drive forward improvements in the home.
- Staff say that managers are visible and well respected by the staff team. Managers motivate the staff by listening to their views, taking action on these views when they can, and by encouraging their professional development.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Improve the nature of sanctions given to young people to ensure that they are restorative in nature.
- Ensure that records indicate how long the sanction is to last so that staff and young people are clear about relevant timescales.
- Ensure that any debriefs with staff following a physical intervention are undertaken individually so that staff have the opportunity to express any concerns.
- Ensure that the location risk assessment includes newly identified risks.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18/01/2017 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 26/04/2016 | Full | Good |
| 13/01/2016 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 30/06/2015 | Full | Good |

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

Recommendations

- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59) In particular, that debriefs with staff are undertaken individually so managers can be assured of the accuracy of the recording and allow staff the opportunity to express any concerns.
- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Living in this home has a positive impact on the outcomes for young people. Those young people who live here benefit from receiving consistent care, clear boundaries and good routines. Very positive and respectful relationships are evident between staff and young people. This is key to young people wanting to invest in the home. One young person said, 'I really appreciate what staff have done for me. I have made so much progress since I came to live here.' Young people soon relax into the routines of the home and learn that they can be confident in the responses that they will receive from those caring for them. This reduces their anxiety, and a reduction in their disruptive behaviours soon becomes evident as they begin to make progress across all areas of their development.

Young people live together harmoniously for the majority of the time. Staff do not tolerate bullying in the home and young people receive encouragement to embrace difference. They engage positively together and new young people are welcomed into the home. One young person commented, 'I like living here. The other young people treat me as a sister.'

There is a family atmosphere in the home. Staff want young people to enjoy ordinary childhood experiences. Young people enjoy home-cooked meals, which they have helped to prepare. They enjoy shopping for clothes, doing their make-up together, or watching a DVD. On the day of the inspection, staff and young people were attending a local pantomime. Staff are creative in their approach and alert to new ways to engage with the young people that they care for, so that they have happy memories about their time in the home.

Staff encourage young people's interests and hobbies. They enjoy activities together and separately. Young people have learned to swim while living here and now enjoy attending the local swimming pool for leisure. They also attend Guides, go to the gym and complete voluntary work. Young people's confidence has grown significantly as a result. One young person said, 'I am so much more confident now. I would never have been able to talk to you like this when I first came to live here. I have the staff to thank for this.' Similarly, one social worker commented, 'Staff ensure that [Name of young person] is afforded wide and varied opportunities on which to develop her self-confidence and resilience.'

Improvements are evident in relation to young people's engagement with education. Some young people have successfully re-engaged with education after moving into the home. All the young people are attending school or college. Staff promote a good work ethic and young people receive encouragement to think about their future career pathways. One young person is planning a career in social care, is learning to drive and is feeling positive about the process of transition to independence. The young person commented, 'I am really grateful to staff. I would not have been able to achieve what I have done without their support.'

Staff promote young people's physical and emotional well-being. They register young people with appropriate health services on their admission to the home and proactively chase appointments with specialist services in order to get young people the support that they need. Staff provide young people with information about a range of health-related issues so that they can make their own informed choices. This includes information on the effects of alcohol, drugs, and smoking. Young people living in the home have made positive choices and do not participate in the misuse of alcohol or drugs, or smoke. Staff implement safe procedures for the storage and administration of medication, but assess when young people are able to manage their own medication safely. Young people who are approaching transition to independence make their own appointments to see a doctor, and self-medicate, following an agreed procedure for storing their medication safely. This helps to ensure that young people are confident to continue to manage their own health needs when they move on from the home.

Staff know young people well and have a thorough understanding of their backgrounds and needs. They provide individualised care that promotes young people's development. Staff focus on what young people can do, and celebrate small achievements. One social

worker commented in feedback taken by the home, 'I feel that staff genuinely care and this is reflected in their commitment to the young person's emotional development and well-being.' Another social worker also commented, 'They are child-centred, and like [Name of young person]. They never relay negative information about her, and always have a positive stance to things. They always have a can-do attitude.'

Many positive comments were received during the inspection about the quality of care that staff provide. Examples of their comments include:

- 'This is the most child focused, welcoming (to young people, professionals and family) and homely environment that I know.'
- 'If only all my other looked after children could be in such positive placements.'
- '[Name of the home] provides a supportive, nurturing environment to meet the needs of young people.'
- 'I use [Name of the home] as a benchmark for other residential homes. In my professional opinion, the care provided is exceptional.'

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

Staff ensure that young people are safe living in the home. Staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff attend regular safeguarding training so that they are aware of recent developments or changes in safeguarding practice. Staff also attend specific training on child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, so that they are alert to early indicators of concern. They also discuss these issues with young people in key-worker sessions and at young people's meetings. This promotes young people's safety and welfare.

Staff are clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Young people benefit from effective and preventative behaviour management practices that are successful because of the positive relationships that exist between staff and young people. Staff successfully de-escalate the majority of incidents effectively without the need for physical intervention. However, on the occasion when a physical intervention is required, records clearly indicate the need for the intervention. Debriefs with young people and staff are evident, although on occasions these take place with all staff involved at the same time. Consequently, managers cannot be assured of the accuracy of recordings and this does not allow the opportunity for staff to express any concerns about the handling of the incident by their colleagues. Records are evaluated by the registered manager so that the staff team can learn from these incidents.

Staff largely use positive reinforcement and rewards to promote positive behaviour. Young people are able to earn additional pocket money if they achieve their weekly incentives. These are individualised for each young person. On rare occasions, staff implement sanctions for poor behaviour. However, these are not always restorative in nature and have no link to the behaviour that warranted the sanction. In addition, it is not always clear when the sanction is due to conclude. For example, if a young person has their television removed from their bedroom, it is not clear when this sanction will conclude. This is confusing for new staff on duty and for the young people themselves. Managers regularly review the sanction records and, as a result, have made

amendments to some of these. Furthermore, managers undertook further training with staff in order to remind themselves and staff of the benefits of taking a restorative approach, so that young people learn to understand the impact of their behaviours on themselves and others.

Thorough staff recruitment processes prevent unsuitable adults from gaining employment in the home. Any gaps in employment are explored, and appropriate references are sought and verified. Any allegations made about staff are taken seriously, although there have been none since the last inspection. The registered manager consults appropriately with the designated officer about any issues that do occur. Similarly, positive liaison is evident with other professionals with a safeguarding responsibility such as the local community police officer.

Young people rarely engage in risk-taking behaviour, such as going missing from home. Where this has historically been a concern for young people, incidents reduce quickly following their admission to the home. On these rare occasions, staff implement the local missing from care protocols and work in partnership with the police and other safeguarding agencies. Staff remain in contact with young people by mobile telephone wherever possible and try hard to locate them, by contacting family and friends and by looking for them in the community. However, these incidents are rare as young people want to spend time here.

Regular health and safety checks ensure the safety of the premises. Fire evacuation drills take place regularly, ensuring that both staff and young people are familiar with how to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Managers have undertaken a location risk assessment to identify risks in the local area, so that staff and young people are aware of preventative strategies that they can employ. However, potential implications for young people, as a result of a violent incident in the locality, had not been included in this, or further exploration undertaken into the potential risks in the surrounding countryside, should young people be missing from the home. Consequently, preventative strategies are unclear.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager in charge of the home. She has managed the home for the last 18 months. A deputy manager is in place to support her, who is in the process of studying for a management qualification. They both know the home well and have the respect of staff and young people. They are enthusiastic about the ethos of the home and are approachable and visible leaders.

Staff say that they feel well supported by managers. They receive regular supervision and appraisal, which enables them to reflect on their practice. One staff member commented in the Ofsted annual survey, 'It is good to have feedback so that we know where we are at in terms of good practice,' and another said, 'Supervision and appraisal allows me to see my progression and the areas I need to progress. This helps me to see how to progress in my career development.' The registered manager also routinely conducts her own staff opinion survey. The feedback from her most recent survey was very positive, although staff are able to contribute their ideas for improvement via this exercise. The registered manager appreciates their contributions and provides feedback

to the staff team on the outcomes of this review. This ensures that staff know that their opinions matter and they are valued. The registered manager provides ongoing feedback to staff about their good practice, which they appreciate. This helps to promote a positive morale. The staff team is largely stable as staff enjoy working here. This provides good continuity for young people.

Staff training is a priority and a range of pertinent training opportunities are available. For example, staff have received training on radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and supporting LGBT young people. Staff have not yet received training on supervising birth family contact, although this has been acknowledged by the registered manager and a training day has been arranged. This ensures that staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of young people in their care. Staff appreciate this investment in their development.

Liaison with other agencies is effective. Positive relationships exist between managers and other professionals. One social worker commented, 'The communication is excellent. I feel in the loop at every stage.' Another commented, 'Communication is frequent and timely. They always pass on safeguarding information in a timely and helpful manner.' Managers also ensure that they remind social workers of their responsibilities, and will chase up any outstanding actions until they reach a satisfactory conclusion. This ensures that issues do not drift and cause young people unnecessary anxiety.

Managers know the young people well and are committed to them. They are able to demonstrate the progress that they have made since moving into the home. Due consideration is given to potential new admissions, ensuring that their needs are compatible with the current residents. The registered manager visits all potential new admissions in advance of placement.

The home's statement of purpose reflects its aims and objectives. The registered manager has a development plan, which helps to prioritise developments in the home. In addition, a young person's development plan allows them to set their own targets for the year ahead. Managers clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home but are continually looking for further improvements. They regularly seek feedback on the operation of the home from those using the service, making amendments to practice if needed. Managers are dynamic and effective.

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: SC442401

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Limited

Registered provider address: Roc Northwest Ltd, Roc House, Ward Green Lane, Ribchester, Preston, Lancashire PR3 3YB

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Paula Normanton

Inspectors

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker, social care inspector

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