

Crown House

Malvern Achievement Services Limited
10 Abbey Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3HG
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

A large national private company operates this residential family centre. It is registered to provide a service to eight families. The service can undertake community-based assessments if within travelling distance.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account	good
How well children and parents are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good

The residential family centre provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 13 March 2014

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This residential family centre is good because:

- Families receive their parenting assessments in a comfortable and well-maintained centre with shared sitting room and dining rooms. Parents and children benefit from using the new sensory room and safe outdoor play area.
- Highly experienced and skilled staff make families feel extremely welcome when they arrive and provide them with strong support throughout their demanding placements.
- Staff ensure that families are able to access local health care and leisure facilities which support their health and well-being.
- Clear written records evidence the progress that many parents make in caring for their children safely.
- Staff demonstrate great dedication in their work with families.
- Staff help parents to access services, such as housing and benefits. This support enables parents to relax and focus on their assessment.
- Parents quickly form trusting relationships with staff, who enable them to feel that they are working together and are listened to.
- Child-focused staff help many parents to improve their understanding of their children's needs and to develop the skills to meet them.
- Staff skilfully undertake life story work.
- When assessment outcomes are negative, caring and highly skilled staff help parents to understand the reasons for the outcome and help them start to come to terms with the possibility of leaving the centre without their children.
- Final assessments are excellent and set out the parents' strengths, areas for development and capacity to change, in order to care for their children safely. Clear evidence supports recommendations that are helpful to families, local authorities and courts.
- Staff work in partnership with a wide range of professionals in order to identify and meet the needs of families, and safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
- Parents, professionals, and extended family members give very positive feedback about the service.
- The registered manager is fully aware of the strengths and areas for development

in the service. She uses feedback from staff, professionals and families in her review processes. This enables her to make relevant plans for the service and drive up standards.

The residential family centre's areas for development:

- Improve communication with parents who have learning disabilities to make sure that they fully understand what is required of them in the assessment process.
- Ensure more effective engagement with all parents that allows them to reflect and provide feedback on their weekly assessments.
- Ensure that there is clearer identification of the health, physical, emotional and social development needs of parents and children in the placement plans.

What does the residential family centre need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that parents are engaged in the process and provided with regular feedback. This engagement is reflected in the written assessment. (NMS 1.8)
- Ensure that parents' and children's physical, emotional and social development needs are identified in their family placement plan and promoted throughout their placement. (NMS 6.1)
- Ensure that staff are equipped with the skills and experience required to meet the needs of the parents and their children and the purpose of the centre. (NMS 16.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Families benefit from working with highly motivated and dedicated staff who provide support and guidance which is tailored to families' individual needs. Consequently, many parents make significant progress in their ability to understand their children's developmental needs and provide them with positive and safe parenting. Parents improve their confidence, self-esteem and parenting skills during their assessments. Many families are enabled to return home with their children, or move on to further assessment in the community.

Parents feel warmly welcomed by staff and other residents when they arrive, and say that this helps them to settle and focus on their assessment. They are given clear information about the rules and boundaries of the centre, and about their assessments. They confirm that they understand why they are here and what is expected of them during the placement. Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in supporting families to obtain benefits and housing entitlements, which removes a lot of worry for parents. Staff are very keen to provide families with positive experiences which educate them for the future. For example, parents can choose to bring their children to a breakfast club, where staff provide a range of breakfast foods. Staff encourage families to understand the importance of breakfast, by making it a social and enjoyable occasion. Families enjoy a range of activities and outings including stay and play, splash-pool, going to the park, art and crafts, and farm park outings. These provide stimulation and social opportunities, and help parents to relax and improve their parenting and life skills. Story time in the new sensory room is particularly popular with children and parents.

Staff are very respectful of the diverse needs of families, which helps them develop positive and trusting relationships with parents. One parent commented that staff were immediately supportive of her religious needs when she arrived. They quickly ensured that she had a prayer mat, appropriate foods and access to a mosque in another town, and they helped her to celebrate Eid with other residents, providing a buffet. She said that this was enormously important in her ability to settle and focus on her assessment. Diversity boards in the centre give parents the message that they are all valued, and pictures of fathers with babies are particularly valuable in promoting positive images of men. Parents feel valued by the staff, and one parent said of her circumstances, 'I never felt judged, which is fantastic.' Parents express that they really like the staff. The value of these positive relationships is particularly evidenced when parents continue to work with staff after a negative assessment outcome.

Staff work in a non-oppressive way, and recognise the power imbalance between themselves and families, understanding that this can be very negative for parents. Staff work hard to help parents make meaningful contributions to their assessments. One parent said, 'We work really well together. Staff can have a laugh and a joke but

they always remain professional.' Parents say that they can be open about their feelings with staff and are confident to say if they are unhappy about something. They know how to complain and are confident to express concerns without fear of a negative impact on their assessments. Families' complaints are dealt with fairly, and outcomes are shared with parents. Parents state that they feel included in discussions and decisions. They say that their assessments are fair and accurate. However, one area for improvement is that their views could be evidenced further in their end-of-week review documents and session records.

Staff use the framework for assessment to plan and undertake thorough assessments of parents' capacity to change, and to understand and meet their children's care needs safely. Assessments are flexible, with different tools and approaches being used. Staff use the Howarth and Morrison parenting capacity ability and motivation model, in order to work with parents and enhance the assessment process. Reports are well written and evidenced, and recommendations are helpful to the local authority and court.

Feedback from professionals is very positive. A health visitor commented, 'Staff are very experienced. They are nurturing and caring and have a genuine fondness for a lot of the families.' The social worker for one family said, 'The service was really really good. They worked with the family to recognise their baby's needs and completed all the work with the family, who formed good relationships with staff. The final report was really detailed, in depth and what was needed. They moved the family forwards well.'

Another area for improvement is the way in which staff support parents who have learning disabilities. Staff provide parents who have learning disabilities with information and guidance in picture form. However, they do not always make it detailed enough to ensure that parents are helped to remember exactly what is expected of them, in order to meet their targets.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: outstanding

Highly trained and vigilant staff keep families exceptionally safe during their assessments. Staff support families to develop their understanding and skills. This makes an exceptional and sustained improvement to their lives.

When they arrive, parents are fully informed about the rules, boundaries and expectations of their behavior in the centre, which serve to protect residents. Staff provide appropriate levels of surveillance for families to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. Parents feel extremely safe and secure. This greatly enhances their experience and the progress that they make during their placement. One mother said, 'Safeguarding has never lapsed, there is always someone watching my baby at night. 24/7 is hard, but made easier by the type of staff here who are so supportive.'

The registered manager regularly reviews and updates the detailed and thorough risk assessments. This highly effective planning enables staff to know when it is necessary to alter the amount of surveillance being undertaken with a family. These decisions are taken in close consultation with the placing local authority. When it is safe, parents are enabled to take increasing responsibility for safeguarding their children within the safe environment of the centre, and in the community. The extremely positive relationships that families have with staff are the foundation for safety in the centre, as they enable staff to influence and guide families through challenging circumstances.

The shared living rooms provide families with opportunities to spend time together. Staff are creative and help parents to learn strategies for avoiding and managing conflict. The social worker for one family commented that, 'Staff managed relationships with other families well.' When conflict does occur between parents, staff respond appropriately by de-escalating situations or, if necessary, involving the police. Staff are trained in physical intervention, but have not had to use this since the last inspection. This is because of their skills and their proactive approach.

Staff work with parents to help them learn to understand risks and the effect that their experiences have had on their ability to safely parent. One health visitor said, 'It's a very safe place. Staff are really good at providing safeguarding advice for parents.' Staff closely observe parents to ensure that their basic care is safe, and provide them with consistent advice and guidance. Safety sessions include safe care of children, safety in the home, parents' own vulnerability and risks in relationships. Comprehensive records are passed on to the staff who are taking over shifts, to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with any safeguarding issues or progress.

Staff follow clear safeguarding procedures in keeping with local safeguarding guidelines. They work closely with other agencies, including social workers, health and the police, to ensure that child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults underpins all of their work with families.

Staff are skillful and confident. They use research informed practice. For example, they incorporate some of the 'signs of safety' into their work, which encourages parent participation and understanding about their own levels of risk. Enthusiastic staff are booked to have training in the protective behaviors model, in order to work with parents to understand risks and build resilience.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have aspirations for families and for the service. They are child focused and ensure that staff meet the ethos and aims of the service by placing families and fairness at the heart of their work. Staff are well qualified. Staff say that they love working at the centre.

The registered manager has gained a good understanding of her team's strengths and areas for development through supervision and observation of practice. She constantly seeks opportunities to develop the members of the staff team by providing relevant training, which will enhance their work with families. Her evaluation of the service is detailed and thorough, and evidences the positive impact that the centre has on families. She incorporates feedback from staff, families and professionals, and keeps records of the outcomes of assessments.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive effective induction and regular supervision, which encourages reflection and accountability. Staff say that they feel strongly supported by the managers, and that supervisions and team meetings are often used to provide learning experiences for staff. They are confident about contributing ideas for working with families and for the development of the centre, in order to drive up standards. The registered manager is keen to use current research for the benefit of families. She enables the staff to gain knowledge and understanding of research and family projects via a board in the office displaying research articles.

The registered manager is proactive in liaising with other services and advocating on behalf of families when they are not receiving the services that they need. Care planning is thorough and effective, and ensures that assessments address the concerns identified by the local authority. However, parents' and children's health plans lack detail and are an area for improvement. The registered manager ensures that staff work effectively with a wide range of professionals in order to support families. Parents are informed about their rights and entitlements, and are provided with advocates when necessary.

An area for further improvement is work with parents who have learning disabilities. Additional training for staff in working with parents who have learning disabilities would ensure that their individual needs are fully identified and met. The family guide could be improved for parents who have learning disabilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and parents. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and parents. They watched how professional staff work with children and parents and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and parents. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the residential family centre knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and parents 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 Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards.

Residential family centre details

Unique reference number: SC051886

Registered provider: Malvern Achievement Services Limited

Registered provider address: Hurstwood Court, New Hall Hey Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6HR

Responsible individual: Emma Beech

Registered manager: Amanda Pomell

Telephone number: 01684 577 496

Email address: Amandapomell@keyschildcare.co.uk

Inspectors

Mrs Louise Whittle, social care inspector

Michelle Moss, social care inspection manager



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Store Street
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M1 2WD

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