

# 1254308

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned and is registered to care for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 25 to 26 October 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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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	good
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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:** not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Children make exceptional progress in education, training and employment. This progress is sustained.
- Experienced, trained staff provide excellent care. Children are developing trusted, positive relationships with adults and with their peers.
- Children benefit from taking part in a range of activities. This is making a difference to children's confidence and self-esteem, as well as enhancing their future prospects.
- Children have significantly reduced harmful risk-taking behaviours. They are supported to manage their own safety effectively.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staff should ensure that children's education targets are aspirational and that they link to each child's care planning and key-work targets. This will support children to make progress in meeting meaningful, individual education targets.
- Staff need to refresh their practice and revisit messages about good health promotion in order to influence children's smoking behaviour.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not applicable		

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

### Recommendations

- Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to understand each child's education and training targets and their next steps to learning. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.11)
- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being, to enhance and supplement that provided by their school. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children to understand and, where necessary, work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being. This is with particular reference to reducing and preventing children smoking tobacco. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children in this home are experiencing excellent quality structured care in a comfortable, child-centred environment. The manager ensures that there are limited changes to children's care arrangements, so that they have the time to develop trusted, positive relationships with adults and their peers.

The manager gives careful consideration to the needs of the children already living in the home when they are planning for children to move in. Admission processes are sensitive to children's needs. Information is shared in a way that supports children to adapt to their new home and limits disruption for children already living in the home. A social worker reported that the planning for the admission of a child had been excellent and significant in helping them to settle.

A strength of the care provided in this home is staff knowing and meeting children's individual needs. As a result, children who have lived in the home for some time continue to make excellent progress. The children who have recently moved in benefit from positive role models, established routines and consistent care.

Children who have lived in the home for some time are achieving beyond what was expected. They have made exceptional progress from their starting points and have sustained positive relationships. Children are achieving in school, in examinations, in training and employment. School staff and employers feedback really positive information about children's achievements. One child has sustained an apprenticeship

and is continuing to make excellent progress.

Children are involved in extra-curricular activities, which make a difference to their confidence and self-esteem, as well as helping their future prospects. For example, children attend cadets, are involved in drama, care for the home's pets and are having driving lessons. Their confidence and self-esteem are enhanced as a result of learning new skills.

Managers are robustly addressing, along with placing local authorities, the need for good education placements for some children who have recently moved into the home. Some children have had poor experiences in education and require a high level of support to overcome any barriers to learning. When there have been delays, the manager has requested professionals' meetings to address the delays. Concerns have been escalated by the manager when issues have not been resolved for children. One child missed some education due to a change of placement close to the end of the school term. The educational lead, the home's manager and the local authority agreed arrangements for a tutor for the child. This provided an opportunity for the child to catch up over the summer break. This evidences that the managers of the home prioritise education for children.

Staff encourage children to do well with the consistent use of incentives. Achievements, however small, are always celebrated.

Staff are continuously assessing what works in engaging children, particularly motivating them in education. Children who have recently moved into the home, with very poor attendance records, have made a lot of progress in a short period of time.

All children have detailed placement plans, informed by what is known about a child on admission. These placement plans are updated through multi-agency assessment. Staff know children's individual needs well. Placement plans incorporate the child's view about their starting points and track their progress. They use a number of child-centred tools to support children to share their views and consider their life plans.

Children have detailed health plans that include meeting emotional health needs. Staff provide nurturing care. They identify if a child is feeling low and proactively put support in place. Children are referred to the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) when appropriate, and are supported to attend appointments. They receive counselling and support from specialist voluntary organisations to meet specific individual needs.

As soon as children move in, they benefit from preventative health services. Staff ensure that immunisations are up to date, and that physical and dental health are checked. Children receive information and are influenced to make good choices about diet and nutrition. One child was reluctant to go to the dentist and the manager involved a parent to support their attendance. As a result, the child received essential dental treatment. Children have also been supported to develop improved sleep patterns, by receiving clear advice and expectations from the start and consistent reinforcement of good

bedtime routines.

Children referred to the home as being an outstanding home to live in. One child said: 'Everyone here has really helped me. They are good with all of the children. Staff stick by us.'

Children's individual identity needs are known and this informs their care and their plans. The home is an inclusive environment where children learn to consider other children's needs. There is no bullying. Children are encouraged to support neighbours and take part in community activities, such as fundraising events.

Staff promote contact with family and friends, particularly for children living a long way from home, to ensure that there are regular, reliable contact arrangements in place. Staff have escalated concerns about a recent delay in contact arrangements being confirmed for one child.

There are a range of consultation mechanisms. As part of the admission process, children are advised about how to make a complaint, they are asked what their preferences are and they benefit from an independent advocacy service and monthly visits by the independent visitor. There are weekly residents' meetings for children, with an agreed agenda. Children participate and they receive feedback if they raise any requests or make suggestions. They contribute to decisions about menus, the decor of the home, activities and holidays. One child is involved in plans to develop an indoor play area in the garage. Children are confident about raising complaints or 'niggles'. The manager and staff team have an excellent record of consulting, listening and responding.

Placement plans are informed by up-to-date statutory reviews and local authority care plans, and include individual targets. Children have a named support worker (key worker) who undertakes individual sessions. The support worker provides advice linked to the placement plan targets. The inspector viewed excellent quality key work covering health advice, relationship advice and raising awareness about safeguarding risks such as those associated with the use of digital technology.

This home has a history of clear, consistent no smoking advice and messages. This needs revisiting and refreshing by staff as recently, some children have been smoking in the home grounds. A recommendation is made to address this.

There is excellent, sustained progress in children developing independence skills. From the start, children have a detailed independence skills plan encouraging them, with support, to take responsibility for their room and their laundry. There is an accredited scheme for children who are preparing to move into independent accommodation. Children were observed to be cooking meals during the inspection, and went shopping with staff for food and for essential items for their planned accommodation. Social workers report that children have confidence in their independence skills.

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

There is an established safeguarding culture within the home. Children report that they feel safe. Children are supported to take risks, such as a gradual increase in free time, as part of their behaviour and risk plans. They learn to keep in touch by telephone and to adhere to agreed times to return home. Due to positive relationships with staff and listening to advice in key-work sessions, children learn to manage their own safety.

Staff have had training in safeguarding and understand the vulnerabilities, needs and histories of the children and the impact on their behaviour. Previous concerns have included children being vulnerable to exploitation, misuse of alcohol, aggressive behaviours, offending behaviours and going missing from home. All children have significantly reduced risk-taking behaviours.

Staff follow safeguarding procedures. They liaise with social workers and safeguarding professionals, seek advice and make referrals appropriately. Agencies report that they receive information in a timely way.

Behaviour management and risk assessment plans provide effective advice to children and staff. They are updated when there is any new information and there are systems in place to ensure that staff are aware of new information.

There have been a small number of children being absent without permission. However, no incidents were escalated to a 'missing' event by the police. Children have remained in contact with staff, and they have returned to the home after a short period. This demonstrates that there are trusting relationships.

Staff are experienced in responding to challenging behaviours. They are trained in physical restraint, and this training includes advice about de-escalating behaviours and distracting children. There have been no physical interventions due to the effective use of de-escalation, sanctions and incentives. The use of a sanction is discussed with children and they then review and sign the records.

There has been a small number of incidents of self-harming behaviour, but this has been managed well. There is advice to staff in the risk assessment and there is a self-harm recording tool. Staff continuously assess and respond to children's moods. Incidents are evaluated immediately and adjustments made. The number of incidents of self-harm is decreasing.

There is a clear policy about the use of digital technology and managing any risks associated with this. Children are advised at the point of admission about the rules regarding the use of mobile phones and computers, and about filters on the home's equipment to prevent misuse. Advice is reinforced in key-work sessions and residents' meetings.

One allegation has been made against staff. The manager followed procedures appropriately and the concern was referred and assessed, leading to no concerns about

risks to children. This demonstrates that children are confident in reporting concerns. The manager has a constructive working relationship with the local authority designated officer.

The manager is experienced in safe recruitment and there are robust recruitment processes in place. She is confident that staff understand the principles of a safe culture within the home and report any concerns.

The registered manager keeps up to date with research and evidence-based practice in safeguarding, and cascades information in team meetings and training sessions. Staff supervision also covers the safeguarding of children.

Staff liaise closely with social workers, the youth offending service, CAMHS and voluntary agencies to reduce risks and to change behaviours. There has been limited contact with the police in response to concerns. However, staff work with the police in a preventative way, attending and participating in community safeguarding meetings. Partnership working helps to keep children safe.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

This home has an experienced, qualified, motivated manager. She has a track record for being committed to developing the skills and knowledge of individual staff and of the team. As a result, there is a good record of staff retention, and if staff move on it is due to promotion and development opportunities. There is a core group of stable staff.

The manager is aspirational for children, staff and the service. She continues to attend training, she delivers training and is motivated to develop practice to improve outcomes for children.

The manager has a track record of influencing decision-making to promote child-centred planning and is a passionate advocate for children looked after.

Professionals report that the home's manager and staff communicate effectively. They are proactive in problem solving to reduce barriers to children's progress, and as a result children continue to make exceptional progress.

The manager understands the strengths of the team and areas for development. A strength of the team is planning for children and addressing emerging concerns. As a result, risks are managed and reduced. The team has a realistic and measured response to the challenges to children's progress. This comes from their experience and they continue to work hard to engage children.

There are no performance or sickness issues within the staff group. The manager describes the staff group as a reliable, committed and resilient team. Monitoring information and records demonstrate a high level of staff training and supervision. There are regular team meetings. Staff report that this adds value to their practice and that they are supported by the managers and the team.

The home has established practice in promoting and listening to the voice of the child, and seeking feedback from professionals and families.

The manager has processes in place to track and evidence progress. There are clear reporting mechanisms to placing social workers and children's progress is evaluated. If there is slow progress, the manager addresses this. She is a 'hands on' manager, and is involved with the children's care on a daily basis. This means that she has a good understanding of children's needs and progress day by day. This drives improvement.

There are good-quality reports from the independent visitor. The manager is receptive to learning and developing the service in response to rigorous monitoring, as are the staff.

This is a confident management team. It has strong links with professionals and in the community. Children benefit from this as it leads to opportunities for voluntary work and after-school opportunities. Good partnership working with families supports reliable contact arrangements.

When there are concerns about delays to children's plans or barriers to progress for children, there is clear evidence of challenge.

The manager has effectively managed changes in staffing and changes in the children's group, so that there is limited impact to longer term residents. Children have continued to make exceptional progress and are excellent role models for their peers.

There is one area of staff skill and knowledge that requires strengthening. Staff should ensure that children's education targets are aspirational, and that they link to each child's care planning and key-work targets. This will support children to make progress in meeting meaningful, individual education targets.

## **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:** 1254308

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Homes2inspire Limited

**Registered provider address:** Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley BR1 1LT

**Responsible individual:** Kenneth Farrimond

**Registered manager:** Kirsty Taylor

## Inspector

Cathey Moriarty: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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