

# 1256059

Registered provider: Homes2Inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection dates:** 21 to 22 November 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**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 good because:

- Children and young people are happy living in this home, and confidently say that they feel safe.
- Each child and young person has made notable progress since their admission to the home.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Incidents are responded to appropriately and, in the majority of cases, individual risks are reduced.
- Strong relationships, based on trust and mutual respect, are formed between staff, children and young people.
- This is a well-managed home, where management decisions are always child focused.
- Staff are enthusiastic about their work, and strive to achieve the very best outcome for each child and young person.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff's approach to recording should be improved to ensure that the issue being reported on is always documented clearly and unambiguously.

### **Recent inspection history**

This is the first inspection of this children's home since it was re-registered under new ownership in May 2017.

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

### Recommendation

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

### Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people say that they are happy living in this home. They like the staff and enjoy spending time with them. Comments from young people included: 'I really like it here because the staff are so supportive of me and the other young people', and, 'When I come in, it is a really nice, calming environment. It feels like living in a family.' It is evident that good relationships exist within the peer group. While there are small disagreements between individuals, for the most part peer relationships are extremely positive. Comments from children and young people demonstrated that they felt genuine sadness when one child left the home recently. This shows that attachments are formed within the peer group.

Parents and involved professionals have a positive view of the care provided. Comments included: 'I cannot praise them enough. Actually, every aspect of the young person's life has improved since moving to this home.'

Education is seen as important. Staff support children and young people to be aspirational. Staff support their attendance and their achievement in education. Staff encourage individuals to explore further education options and to seek part-time work, when appropriate. While there are some young people who are not attending education currently, the inspection found that staff have worked, and continue to work, to improve this. For others, the improvements they have made since moving into the home are notable. One child has achieved 100% attendance this term, which is a vast improvement on their previous low-level school attendance. An education professional said: 'The child has turned a corner since moving to this home. There has been a massive improvement.'

Staff support young people to develop the life skills they will need to live independently as young adults. Young people are proud of their personal progress and spoke confidently during the inspection about their evolving skills and abilities. Staff understand and respond to individual, specific needs. For example, they recognise when a young person is not emotionally or developmentally ready to move on to semi-independence, and then proactively advocate on their behalf for appropriate services, going forward.

Health needs are well supported. The culture of the home encourages children and young people to follow a healthy lifestyle. A member of staff who previously worked within a health promotion role is currently leading a drive for improved healthy eating and increased physical exercise. Targets include role modelling, with staff taking part in sponsored physical activities, and children and young people engaging in a planned 'Couch to 5K' programme. Staff work effectively alongside health professionals to support individual physical and emotional health needs.

The home environment is well maintained and presents as welcoming and homely. Young people are proud of their bedrooms, which are decorated to their personal tastes.

Staff respect and value family relationships, and recognise the importance of these for children and young people. A parent made the following comment about staff: 'They don't just help my daughter, they help me too.' This parent felt that the help provided by staff supports her in having a positive relationship with her child. The inspector noted the sensitive way in which more difficult family relationships are supported. As a result, children and young people are able to maintain family relationships while living away from home.

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

The caring culture that is evident in this service means that children and young people quickly start to feel safe. One young person spoke about how she feels much safer. She now recognises how previous risky behaviours put her at risk of harm and she is clearly proud of her own progression. This demonstrates that children and young people become more self-aware.

Safeguarding arrangements are managed well through the effective implementation of risk and behaviour management plans. Staff safeguard young people by educating them about known and potential risks. Comments from involved professionals demonstrate a view that while concerns may remain, they are confident in the safeguarding arrangements. A professional said: 'I feel they are absolutely doing everything they can to support the reduction of self-harm.'

When safeguarding concerns are identified, these concerns are taken seriously and responded to in line with the home's policies, procedures and statutory requirements. A local authority safeguarding officer commented positively about the way that safeguarding concerns are addressed: 'They have quickly referred concerns and have acted to safeguard children while an investigation is carried out.'

There are clear improvements in behaviour for most children and young people. Feedback from children and young people demonstrates that they respect the guidance given by staff, and are keen to do the right thing. Staff recognise and praise positive changes in behaviour. Recent feedback obtained from a parent by the independent visitor confirms that the parent feels that behaviour is well managed. The parent said: 'There have been some issues with behaviour, which staff managed really well. All the

staff stick to what they are saying, which is good as he needs consistency.'

Regular consultation with children and young people provides an opportunity for concerns to be raised. Each child and young person would be confident about making a more formal complaint if they felt this was necessary.

The number of incidents of children or young people being missing from the home is low. Staff understand their responsibilities when children and young people are found to be missing from the home, or absent without consent, and work proactively with external agencies to seek their prompt return. Staff report incidents in line with agreed multi-agency protocols, triggering external support to track the whereabouts of missing children and young people. Records demonstrate that staff endeavour to stay in contact with children and young people, and spend time looking for them. A social worker spoke very positively about the way a member of staff recently followed a child for 25 minutes in order to ensure their safety.

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

The home is managed by a very experienced registered manager, who is currently undertaking the required management qualification. The manager is supported by a deputy, who stands in to manage the home when the registered manager is absent. Involved professionals speak highly of the management team. Comments included: 'The home is run superbly.'

Comments from staff demonstrate that they are happy in their work and feel supported in their role. Staff speak very positively about the extensive training they are provided with. This means that they undertake their roles and responsibilities confidently.

The service provided reflects the care arrangements as described in the home's statement of purpose. Involved professionals speak positively about the way that staff and managers support children and young people. In relation to a child's recent placement move from the home, staff remained committed to the child and were sad to see him leave. The team worked with the placing authority to strengthen arrangements, in order to reduce the potential for harm in the build-up to the transition to a new placement. Feedback collated during this inspection highlighted that communication with external agencies is highly effective. Additionally, parents confirmed that they are promptly updated about any issues that arise, and are always involved in their children's care.

While children and young people receive well-planned care in practice, areas of weakness have been identified in relation to care planning documentation and the quality of some areas of recording. As individual plans are already being reviewed and updated, and then transferred to new planning documents, the inspector has not made a recommendation on this occasion. An example of the weakness in record-keeping is the use of ambiguous text in some behaviour management records. For example, some records and associated letters sent directly to children, in relation to sanctions, read as if

a fine has been imposed for inappropriate behaviours. While the manager clarified that this is actually reparation, the way the letters have been written increases the potential for children and young people to believe that they are being fined. A recommendation has been set to improve record-keeping.

## **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:** 1256059

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

**Registered provider:** Homes2Inspire Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** John Parker

**Registered manager:** Dominique McKenzie

## Inspector

Mary Timms: social care inspector

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