

1263120

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private children's home provides care and accommodation for four children and young people who are unable to live with their families.

The registered manager has been registered since 22 September 2017.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 April 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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 effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Recommendations

- Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia, photographs and films of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The quality of care review should evaluate the impact that the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. It should clearly show children and other partner's views about the quality of care to inform and support continued improvement. The improvement plan should show who is responsible for carrying out tasks and an appropriate timescale for completing them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 64 and 65, paragraphs 15.2 and 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a very friendly and supportive home. Staff make sure that children enjoy positive experiences, have plenty of opportunities to have fun and make good progress.

Children enjoy very positive relationships with staff and the other children. Most of the children have come to live here recently. They have been warmly welcomed by the staff. Staff clearly show children that they are interested in their lives and that they want to help them. This has helped children settle quickly and feel at home.

The manager works well with social workers to plan children's care. He only agrees to look after a child once he understands the child's needs and knows that staff have the right skills and knowledge to help the child. The manager also carefully considers the impact on the other children of a child moving in. Written impact risk assessments clearly show the reasons why the manager assessed that this is a suitable place to meet the child's needs and how any identified risks can be effectively managed.

Staff provide children with a high standard of care that is tailored to their personal needs and aspirations. They play an active role in children's wider support networks to make sure that children continue to get the best possible support in every aspect of their lives.

Staff help children to have meaningful relationships with the people important to them. Staff actively encourage and support children to see their parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. They make sure that these are safe and positive experiences for children.

Staff make sure that children get the right help that supports and encourages their education and learning. All of the children are taking part in education and doing well at school and college. Staff help children to understand the importance of education and to think about what they want to do with their lives. For example, they are successfully supporting a child's ambition to be a joiner. The child is highly motivated and doing exceptionally well. He has already sold furniture that he has made.

Staff work effectively with teachers and local authorities to make sure that children get the right support when they have difficulties at school. Staff support children to return to school positively and as soon as possible after they have been excluded. Staff have been influential in supporting another child to return to full-time education. They have made sure that he has worked with his tutors and taken part in meaningful educational activities. He is looking forward to starting his new school.

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

Children live in a safe home. The strong and supportive safeguarding arrangements help children feel safe and protected from harm. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs, circumstances and any current concerns about their welfare.

Staff use up-to-date and clearly written risk assessments and plans that support children's safety. Staff balance carefully the challenges of protecting children, while enabling them to take reasonable risks to promote their personal growth. These risks include using technology and social media safely and spending time with friends outside of the home.

The manager and staff take decisive action when they have concerns about children. They report their concerns appropriately and quickly to safeguarding agencies. For example, when a child was going missing persistently, the manager held risk management meetings with the social worker, police and the other people involved in the child's care. Together, they developed a suitable strategy for managing the risks for the child.

Staff make every effort to help children to understand the risks and dangers of going missing from home. When children have gone missing from the home, staff have done the right things to try to find them quickly. Staff go out looking for them, and they check with the child's family and friends and the places that the children usually go to. Staff keep detailed records of the times when children go missing from home. They use this information well to understand what happened and to help them to reduce the risks of children going missing from home.

Staff work positively and confidently with children to find the best possible ways to help them manage their feelings safely and moderate their behaviour. Staff try to find out, and understand, the reasons why children are upset, and they work together to find a solution. Staff help children to know about the benefits of positive behaviour and guide them to make good choices. For example, staff are successfully using rewards and encouragement to help a child stop swearing and to get on better with other children.

Staff have a good understanding of the impact of children's experiences on their emotional well-being and behaviour. Staff notice when children are struggling and make every effort to find out what is wrong. They make sure that children have easy access to the specialist psychological and psychiatric support they need.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager provides clear and effective leadership. He leads a strong team of caring, enthusiastic and skilled staff who have high aspirations for children. The manager and staff provide children with a positive home environment and opportunities they need to improve their lives.

The manager and staff have a detailed understanding of children's needs, experiences and progress. They challenge effectively local authorities and other services to provide children with the support that will meet their needs. The manager makes sure that social workers provide him with the up-to-date information and assistance he needs to look after the children properly.

The staffing arrangements ensure that there are always enough knowledgeable, experienced and qualified staff available to meet children needs. Staff work together cohesively. They plan the day-to-day care of children well to provide the best possible support.

The manager provides each member of staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement. Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on their work with children and improve their practice.

The manager supports staff to develop professionally. Staff build their knowledge and skills through good-quality training relevant to the needs of children. Staff have recently completed training that has improved their understanding of assessing risk, mental health and supporting children at risk of self-harm.

The manager has a realistic understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. He has taken action to improve things since the last inspection. Care planning and the assessment and management of risk effectively support children. Staff have a better understanding of the needs of the children they are supporting.

Children's records are now detailed and up to date and represent an important contribution to their life histories. However, the records would be improved further by including memorabilia, photographs and films of children's time living at the home and would help children to record significant life events.

The manager's review of the quality of care that children receive does not evaluate the impact it is having on children's lives. It does show children's and other partners' views about the quality of care to inform and support continuous improvement. Although the review sets clear priorities for development, it does not show who is responsible for

carrying each of the tasks or the timescale for completing them.

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: 1263120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead,
Merseyside CH41 1BP

Responsible individual: Andrew Mannix

Registered manager: Barry Henry

Inspectors

Nick Veysey: social care inspector

Mark Kersh: social care inspector

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