

SC032838

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight boys, aged between six and 12, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 May 2018

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	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 27 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
09/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/07/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Decide what each six monthly review should focus on based on the specific circumstances of the home and any areas of high risk to children. The review does not need to address every part of the Quality Standards but should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress at this home. Here, they find acceptance, support, love and affection. Children are allowed to be children. They are encouraged to use their imagination to enjoy the fun and fantasy missing from their lives due to early childhood trauma.

Staff try to make every day special for them. They make sure that they capture plenty of treasured moments and memories to fill their individual photograph albums and memory boxes. Children thrive on the encouragement and praise they receive. Consequently, they feel loved and cherished by those caring for them, without exception. They have a strong sense of belonging in this home.

Children attend the company's school, which is joined to the children's home. Their attendance is excellent and they are reported to be making tremendous progress. The curriculum is tailored to their individual needs. One social worker commented, 'I wanted him to be where he could be a child. He missed out on this previously. Emotionally they are meeting his needs very well. He hated school, now he is enjoying school for the first time in his life.'

Children in this home have been encouraged to develop a love of reading. It is a very soothing pastime for some and for others it has opened up a new world of imagination for them, Harry Potter being a firm favourite of them all.

Children have many and varied hobbies and interests, including football clubs and the Boys Brigade. Children are encouraged to follow their dreams. The home has a wealth of books, toys and games to stimulate their interest. For one child, this was singing and playing a guitar to a paid audience. Most of the children share a passion for pebble art. They paint their own pebbles to leave on a local beach and hunt for pebbles left by others. This gives them hours of fun, when they are not playing on bikes or skateboards.

Professionals and parents speak highly of the care children receive. One social worker

commented, 'The home has been able to offer [child's name] unconditional acceptance, which it is hoped will help stabilise him so that therapeutic work can take effect. I think this home is excellent.' A parent said, 'All staff go above and beyond what they need to do.'

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

Children say that they feel safe and well looked after. Children's safety is paramount and staff are proactive in making sure children remain safe. Children's individual risks and vulnerabilities are completely understood by staff. They are guided by individual risk assessments and planning that ensures children's safety without denying them the fun of being children.

Children are happy and settled at this home. Consequently, there have been no occurrences of children being missing or leaving the home without permission.

Children are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They learn strategies to help them cope with the often difficult feelings and emotions they experience. Accordingly, they become increasingly confident and resilient the longer they live at this home.

Staff work in close partnership with an external child-play therapist and are trained to understand the issues behind behaviours presented. Staff successfully use a range of distraction and de-escalating techniques to avoid the need for physical intervention, which is likely to distress children more. There is minimal use of physical intervention and this trend has been decreasing year-by-year.

Children welcome visitors to their home. They are polite and very well behaved. They are encouraged to be kind to each other and know that bullying in any form is unacceptable. One parent commented, 'I have seen a vast improvement in him. There haven't been any occasions when he has been missing from home. He is no longer abusive, and he listens to me.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is clearly passionate and fully committed to the home providing the highest quality of care. She is very experienced, leads by example and has high expectations for all children in her care.

Her passion and enthusiasm clearly motivate her staff team. The team is imaginative and skilled at 'thinking out of the box'. Their creativity is encouraged to make sure that children have the best possible experience while living at this home.

The home is well organised and runs very smoothly for one that has eight children under the age of 10 years. The registered manager has a thorough knowledge of each child and can easily demonstrate the considerable progress they have made.

Staff say that they feel valued and respected. They say that they are well supported by their registered manager on a day-to-day basis as well as being provided with regular professional supervision. Team meetings are regularly arranged and often attended by external therapists who are able to provide further advice and guidance. Staff say that it is a nice place to work and liken it to their second family home.

Internal and external monitoring arrangements are robust. Any potential shortfalls or issues that are identified are dealt with immediately and have no negative impact on the quality of care provided.

As a result of this inspection, one recommendation is made to improve the content of the registered manager's quality of care review report.

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: SC032838

Provision sub-type: residential special school

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Registered provider address: Meathop Park, Meathop, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria
LA11 6RF

Responsible individual: Clair Davies

Registered manager: Amanda Fishwick

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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