

1264333

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number owned and managed by a private organisation. The home provides a stable environment for boys and girls, aged 8 to 12 years on admission. It accommodates up to four children on a medium- to long-term basis.

The registered manager has been at the home since it was registered in April 2018.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 February 2019

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.

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

In particular, that staff monitor the food eaten by children to ensure that they are eating a nutritious diet.

- Ensure that all staff have been adequately trained in the principles of restraint and any restraint techniques appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for as defined in the home's Statement of Purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.57)
- Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

In particular, ensuring that children's bedrooms are cleaned and tidied, and DVDs and electronic games are age-appropriate.

- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('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

The home was registered in April 2018 and became operational in May 2018. Three of the current residents moved into the home, together with staff they knew, from another home in the organisation. This transition was well handled, with children being involved in the move and having the opportunity to visit the home in advance. Consequently, the move caused little disruption and the children quickly settled.

Children benefit from living in a structured environment, with clear boundaries and routines. They know what is expected of them and are learning to manage their own behaviour. Children have good relationships with staff. However, there have been a number of recent staff changes, which has been unsettling for the long-term residents.

Children enjoy spending time with staff, who are eager to engage them in activities outside of the home, such as swimming and going to the trampoline park. Children also pursue their individual interests, such as horse riding and singing lessons. Children are having fun and learning new skills. Consequently, improvements in their confidence and self-esteem are evident. One social worker commented, 'I am impressed how staff can engage young people in a meaningful and attentive way.'

Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their interests and hobbies. However, at the time of the inspection, they were messy and did not appear to have been recently cleaned. One young person had been away from the home for a number of days, but dirty plates and glasses were still in his room. This detracts from the otherwise homely environment. In addition, DVDs and electronic games suitable for older children were evident in children's bedrooms and communal areas in the home.

The home is in a quiet rural location, but close to a busy town and all amenities. It is warm and welcoming. It is spacious enough for children to spend time together and to have some quiet time alone. There is plenty of outside space for children to play. Children enjoy playing football, playing on their scooters and there is a swing and a slide. In addition, there is a guinea pig to care for. Staff support children to care for their own pets if they express an interest and can show that they take this responsibility seriously. Consequently, one child currently has her own rabbit and another has a goldfish.

Good-quality placement plans clearly outline children's needs, routines and contact arrangements. Staff are knowledgeable about children's histories. Children's physical and emotional healthcare needs are addressed. All children have access to therapy and the majority attend weekly. However, despite some concerns about children's appetite and diet, staff are not monitoring what they are eating. This would help to ensure that children are eating a healthy diet.

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

Children are mostly settled in this home, trusting those who care for them. They feel safe and secure here. They know how to make a complaint and have easy access to the registered manager, whom they see daily. They know that she will listen to any worries that they have.

Staff receive safeguarding training at the start of their employment, which is regularly updated, thus ensuring that they are alert to behaviours of concern and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Risk assessments demonstrate that staff assess a range of risks associated with each child's behaviour. They agree on the most appropriate strategy to adopt to reduce this risk and keep children safe. However, incidents referred to are not put into context, making it difficult to assess whether this is a current area of concern, which requires additional staff vigilance. In addition, risk assessments have not always been updated in relation to recent incidents, reducing their effectiveness.

Children benefit from good-quality behaviour management plans. These indicate likely trigger points and the best way to de-escalate negative behaviours. However, staff need to engage in physical intervention on occasion. A senior management review of behaviour management has recently been completed. This was as a result of a high number of physical interventions taking place. This did not identify any real concerns and the number of restraints had already started to reduce significantly. However, on one occasion a new member of staff engaged in a restraint prior to receiving her formal training, potentially compromising the safety of both herself and the child involved. Furthermore, the recording of incidents is variable, with some lacking detail.

Children currently living in the home rarely engage in risk-taking behaviour. They do not smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol. Staff allow older children to take age-appropriate risks, such as spending time in the community with their friends. However, one child is struggling with living near to his family. He has started to put himself at risk by going missing from the home. Staff actively search for him, liaising appropriately with other agencies, to ensure his safe return.

Staff recruitment processes are generally sound. However, further exploration has not always taken place when dates of employment on an application form do not tally with those provided by a referee.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She transferred to these premises, along with staff and children, in May 2018. She is passionate about achieving good outcomes for children and advocates strongly for them. She challenges local authority practice when it is not in the best interest of the child.

The manager is a visible presence in the home. She is available to staff and children.

She ensures that children are involved in decisions about their care and about developments in the home. Children usually seek her out on their return from school, to update her about their school day. Children respect her and her decision-making.

The manager works well with other professionals. Those spoken to during the inspection spoke highly of her commitment and communication. One social worker commented, 'Staff communication is brilliant, both with me and [Name of child]'s mother. Staff have built a good relationship with her, which has really helped our rehabilitation plans.'

Professionals report the receipt of focused and timely information when they need it. One professional commented, in feedback taken by the home, 'Very welcoming and professional. Reports provided to inform the meeting.' Another also commented, as part of the Ofsted annual survey returns, 'Staff work in a professional capacity to meet the specific needs of the children.'

Generally, management oversight is good. Evaluation of restraints and consequences has resulted in learning for the team and amendments to practice. However, the deputy manager is currently off work, resulting in additional pressure. Some slippage in the manager's oversight was evident. This included documents remaining unsigned, an error in the medication record not being identified for a number of days, variable quality of recording and documents not being updated.

Staff receive regular supportive supervision and an annual performance appraisal. The manager also prioritises training and development opportunities for staff. Staff feel supported and value the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills.

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: 1264333

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 1 Tustin Court, Riversway, Preston
Lancashire PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: Jason Hall

Registered manager: Lois Scholes

Inspector

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019