

1263120

Registered provider: Apex Children's Services

Interim 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 up to four children and young people who are unable to live with their families.

The manager has been registered since September 2018.

Inspection date: 19 February 2019

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2018

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

The new manager is enthusiastic and is committed to improving outcomes for young people. She has initiated several changes in the organisation of the home. Staff said that these changes have been positive. Consequently, staff said that they are more confident in their roles. This is because staff are now fully included in transition planning for young people, and the records and documentation have been streamlined with clear timeframes for completion.

Several young people have moved into the home since the last inspection. They have been supported well by staff during this time and are settling in well. Young people who have left have successfully moved back to their families or into foster care. Staff

advocated very well on behalf of one young person. Based on the wishes and feelings of the young person, they successfully challenged the placing authority on the suitability of a new placement. As a result, the young person moved to an alternative placement where they are thriving and have been able to remain at the same school with their friends.

Young people are being encouraged to keep appropriate memorabilia and photographs. This provides a point of reference to help them to reflect on their time here. Staff said that the young people enjoy sharing their memories with them. However, this initiative is still in its infancy and staff have plans to extend it further.

Monitoring of the home continues to be secure. The independent person's reports are detailed and provide insight into what the home does well and the areas for development. However, while the independent person talks to young people during their visit they do not give any indication as to the actual conversation other than reporting that young people raised no concerns. This limits the home's ability to make changes based on the questions asked of the young people, and their answers.

The registered manager has yet to submit her first monitoring report to Ofsted. Therefore, she has not implemented the recommendations from the last inspection, regarding identifying who is responsible for carrying out tasks and an appropriate timescale for completing them. However, she has a secure understanding of the home's strengths and the areas for development.

Staff understand the young people's vulnerabilities and help to keep them safe. A young person wrote, 'I am happy because everyone is very nice, and I trust the staff when I need to.' However, for one young person staff are not yet planning effectively to keep in touch and to see them during the day, to minimise the risk of them going missing. For example, on one occasion, the young person left the home in the morning and did not return home at the designated time, and was then reported missing. Staff had spoken to them but had not seen them for several hours. This was further compounded as the registered manager was still waiting for information from the placing authority which would further inform planning relating to the young person. This information was being delivered that day.

Young people are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Extensive work was undertaken with one young person regarding criminal exploitation. This was recognised by the professionals working with them. A safeguarding officer wrote, 'The registered manager's input could not be better and the level of joint working happening has been the reason that we all know at any given point what is actually going on so... thank you.'

Overall, young people said that they feel safe here and have a positive relationship with the staff. Young people are confident to talk with staff about a variety of topics. Written feedback from one young person said, 'I feel comfortable with [Name of staff] when she is on the same floor as me [at night]. If there is anything wrong I think that I will speak to her because I've opened up with her straight away.'

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 26/04/2018 | Full | Good |
| 17/01/2018 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |

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

Recommendations

- Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of the information from independent and internal monitoring. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55 paragraph 10.24) In particular, the independent person should report on their discussions with young people.
- 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)

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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

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

Responsible individual: Barry Henry

Registered manager: Jennifer Savage

Inspector

Chris Scully, 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 looked after children, 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