

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 seven 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: 28 to 29 August 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.

Date of last inspection: 5 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2019	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- 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 DVDs and electronic games are age appropriate.
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) In particular, paintwork should be refreshed when surfaces become marked or damaged and furniture should be replaced when broken or worn.
- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5) Specifically, risk assessments should be kept under review and updated when necessary.
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return to home interview. Homes should take account of the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30) In particular, that young people's absences from home are assessed in line with missing from home policies and procedures, and that these are responded to accordingly.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a nurturing environment and are making good progress. Children are mostly settled and have formed warm and positive relationships with staff. This gives the children a sense of security. One social worker said, '[child's name] feels safe and feels like it is his home. He has high levels of trust and fantastic relationships with particular members of staff.'

The progress that some children have made has meant that they have successfully returned to their family home or moved on to foster care arrangements. These transitions have been well planned and managed and the children have been well prepared. One child said, 'I have enjoyed living at [name of home]. The staff were really nice and they looked after me. It was a happy place to live.'

All children attend full-time education and are making good progress. Staff are supporting one child to prepare for the transition to secondary school. Staff have arranged a visit to the school and school staff have visited the home. This sensitive and planned approach has eased the child's anxieties about the move.

Staff encourage children to make friendships with other children from the local area. They support children to spend time at each other's houses and provide opportunities for them to play together. One social worker said, 'They have built good links with the parents of [young person's] friends to support natural friendships being built.'

Children have the opportunity to access a wide range of activities. Staff encourage them to pursue their personal hobbies and interests as well as to try new activities. For example, staff have supported one child to try fishing for the first time. Children have recently enjoyed a camping trip abroad. To prepare for this, staff held a theme night about the country they were visiting and children learned new words and phrases to use on their trip. This has given children the opportunity to create special memories.

The home is modern and spacious and there is a large garden available for outdoor play. Children's bedrooms are highly personalised and decorated to reflect children's individual tastes. One child has lots of soft toys and fairy lights to decorate her room. However, the paintwork is marked in some of the communal areas and some items of furniture were broken. A recommendation has been made to address this.

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

Staff understand children's individual needs and vulnerabilities well. All children have comprehensive care plans and behaviour support plans that help staff to keep them safe. The plans contain detailed strategies for staff to use to defuse and de-escalate situations when they arise. Risk assessments are in place. However, some have not been updated on a regular basis. This means that they do not always accurately reflect the current known risk levels.

Children benefit from individual key-work sessions which give them regular opportunities to reflect on their behaviours and talk about their feelings. Staff also use these sessions as informal learning opportunities. They help children to understand and recognise emotions and how other people may be feeling.

Staff have established clear boundaries and routines that support children to understand what is expected from them. This is helping children to manage their behaviours better. Staff consistently use incentives and praise to reinforce positive behaviours. This is successful, as the children enjoy choosing rewards that are meaningful to them and this has maximised their impact.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles and actively encourage children to eat a balanced diet

and to be physically active. Staff support children to attend activities and they have recently undertaken a fun run in aid of a local charity together. One child told the inspector how proud he was to have won this race with his friend.

Children rarely engage in risk-taking behaviours. One child did go missing from home as he was struggling living in close proximity to his family. Staff followed all the procedures in place to locate him and return him safely. However, return interviews were not always undertaken by the responsible local authority. On some occasions, the manager has not provided sufficient challenge to hold those responsible to account.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified for the role. She is ambitious for children and is focused on supporting them to fulfil their potential. She is child centred and is an effective advocate for the children. For example, she has successfully challenged a local authority decision regarding a school placement to achieve the best outcome for a child.

Members of staff report that they feel valued and that staff morale is high. They benefit from regular supervisions and annual appraisals. This gives staff the opportunity for reflective practice discussions and supports continuous professional development. One member of staff said, 'We constantly reflect on improvements that we can make and all our opinions are listened to.'

The manager understands the importance of training and ensures that staff are well equipped and skilled for the roles that they undertake. One member of staff said, 'We get to go on lots of training courses and can ask to attend courses we are interested in. There are also refresher training courses available when we need it.'

The manager understands the home's strengths and areas for development and has an appropriate plan in place to address this. There is a system in place to monitor and quality assure internal processes. However, there are vacancies in the management team and this has started to have an impact on the manager's capacity to oversee these processes. The quality of recording was found to be variable and some documents required updating.

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: 1 Tustin Court, Port Way, Ashton-On-Ribble, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

Responsible individual: Louise Whitby

Registered manager: Lois Scholes

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, social care inspector

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