

1222089

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children. It is one of four homes owned by an independent organisation, caring for children who display challenging behaviours and need support with their emotional needs.

The registered manager has extensive experience in children's residential care. He has level 4 and 5 qualifications in leadership and management.

Visit dates: 27 to 28 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 17 July 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The children told the inspector that they are happy living in the home and that they like the staff who care for them. Because of this, children are settled and are making good progress.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have engaged children with various activities both in the home and, where possible, in the community. For example, one child spoke about the fun they had when they went to a theme park with staff. These experiences strengthen children's relationships with staff.

The children have trusting relationships with staff and go to them for reassurance and hugs when they need it. One child said, 'Staff listen to my worries and help me with my behaviour.' This support helps children to feel safe and well cared for.

Staff are successful at meeting children's health needs. Staff offer practical support to children. For example, they taught one child how to take their own medication independently. This has had a positive impact on the child's health, as previously they were reluctant to take their medication when staff administered it. The child is now empowered to take ownership of their own health needs.

Staff ensure that all children access education in line with their plans. Staff communicate effectively with the school and work closely with them to ensure that children attend. One social worker told the inspector that his child is thriving at school. This progress is due to the staff persistently looking at new ways to motivate and support his child to attend education.

Staff support children to stay in touch with their families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when direct contact was not possible, staff supported children to have video calls with their families. The support that staff put in place during the lockdown restrictions has helped to maintain children's relationships with their families. Because of this, one child has been able to progress to overnight stays with his parents. This was not happening prior to the pandemic. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the support that staff provide to children.

The safety of children

The registered manager ensures that risk assessments are up to date. Staff have a good understanding of the risk assessments, and children are aware of any changes made. Risk assessment are effective; they ensure that children can lead active lives while keeping them safe.

The registered manager has worked closely with the police and local authority to plan how best to respond to the risk-taking behaviours of one child. This has been successful and has resulted in a reduction of incidents of the child placing himself at risk of harm.

Staff are successful at managing children's behaviours and therefore only use physical interventions as a last resort. The inspector found that when staff restrain children, it is appropriate, proportionate and in accordance with the child's behaviour management plan. However, the registered manager does not always evaluate the effectiveness of such incidents. These are missed opportunities to learn and improve staff practice.

The registered manager effectively manages safeguarding incidents. For example, the registered manager has completed an analysis of allegations made by one child against staff. This has provided staff with a better understanding of the child's past experiences of relationships with adults. The registered manager has put additional support in place for the child and staff. As a result, there has been a reduction in unsupported allegations made by the child.

Children's plans are up to date and provide clear guidance to staff on how to identify and respond to changes in children's behaviour. This proactive approach to risk management gives staff a better understanding of how to support children when they are in crisis. This reduces the severity of such incidents. However, sometimes staff record incidents using terminology which is confusing to the reader. The impact of this is low, as staff and managers have a shared knowledge of what this terminology means.

Staff have worked hard to minimise the risks to children during the pandemic. Staff have completed training in relation to COVID-19 to better equip them with the skills to respond to the pandemic. Staff took immediate action when one child showed symptoms of COVID-19. This minimised the potential risk to other children, staff and the community.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is an effective leader and he leads by example. The staff and the professionals involved with the children told the inspector that because of his child-focused approach he has made a significant impact on the progress that the children have made.

The registered manager has good monitoring systems in place, which allow him to identify and address shortfalls quickly. The registered manager consults with the children and staff about the development of the home. For example, the decoration of the home has been based on children’s feedback and input.

The registered manager supports staff through regular supervisions and annual appraisals. Those staff who are involved in difficult incidents in the home are offered additional support and guidance. This has improved the confidence of staff when dealing with children’s challenging behaviours and has ensured that staff have a better understanding of their roles.

Staff receive regular training to develop their knowledge and skills. Recently, they received training in relation to sensory impairment. This has helped staff to better understand and manage one child’s behaviour. Furthermore, in response to the knowledge obtained from this training, changes were made to one child’s bedroom to take account of his sensory needs. Because of the adaptations made, the child can sleep better at night.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure.</p> <p>(Requirement 35 (3)(a)(vii))</p>	<p>27/11/2020</p>

Recommendations

- Staff should be 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)

Children’s home details

Unique reference number: 1222089

Registered provider: Platinum Services For Children (Residential Care) Limited

Registered provider address: The Apex, 2 Sheriffs Orchard, Coventry, Warwickshire CV1 3PP

Responsible individual: Leonard Pattinson

Registered manager: Wayne Barker

Inspectors

Sam Dulay-Kainth, Social Care Inspector
Joanna Warburton, Social Care Inspector

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