

SC028460

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

There were four children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children and staff. Written and telephone discussions were held with allocated social workers. A staff questionnaire was also shared for those staff who were not on site but wished to contribute their views.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting to carry out an assurance visit on 4 November 2020.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2021

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: 8 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/04/2019	Full	Good
09/04/2018	Full	Good
15/05/2017	Full	Good
17/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy a warm and comfortable home. On average, each child has been resident in the home for two years, which has given them time to settle and make progress. Children continue to visit and keep in contact with staff after leaving. This positivity is echoed by one placing social worker who commented, 'I am really impressed with the home, my child has come along so much.'

The home has strived to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by offering children a range of activities to enjoy safely in the home, while continuing to adhere to restrictions. This includes sessions with a personal trainer, henna tattoos and pamper evenings. Children say that they enjoy these sessions.

Children value the help and support offered by staff. One child remarked on her increased maturity and commented, 'It's a good place to grow.'

Children learn valuable lessons to help them to live more independently, including budgeting and cooking. Staff understand the challenges faced by children when they move on to less supportive settings with a reduced income. They guide children to access the range of benefits and government support they can access on leaving the home.

Staff regularly involve children in decision-making. For example, children formed part of the interview panel during a recent round of staff recruitment. This offered leaders and managers a valuable insight from a child's perspective and supported the process effectively.

Behaviour management is effective. Children respond well to clear and consistent expectations of behaviour set by staff. Children are motivated by the monthly award of 'young person of the month' and learn to understand the effect of their behaviours on themselves and the wider community.

The home values education and its positive impact on establishing positive routines for children. Staff are proactive and help children to research college courses. In addition, one staff member recently attended a child's school to support them through a recent exam. Despite this, one child has not been in education since March 2021, with insufficient challenge from the home towards the placing authority.

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

Children enjoy a sense of community in their home and establish close and trusting relationships with staff. This helps to promote a safe environment where children and staff speak openly and learn to respect each other and their respective differences.

Risk assessments and care plans are of good quality. Care plans focus on clear and simple objectives for children and staff to work towards, such as encouraging children to be appropriately assertive. Staff understand these objectives and patiently work with children to encourage progress.

All the children have reduced the occasions that they go missing from the home. Staff support this positive progress by pushing placing authorities to agree for approved overnight contact with friends and family, where appropriate. Consequently, children see the benefit of transparency with professionals and build trust with staff.

Staff are well trained and alert to key areas of risk, such as child criminal exploitation. Placing social workers are swiftly alerted when children begin to struggle or display an increase in behaviours such as self-harm. This ensures that concerns are shared quickly with relevant care agencies, with risk assessments being reviewed to ensure that they are still robust.

Key work is of good quality and is well recorded. Children engage in life-story work with staff and enjoy sensitive and planned discussions around difficult topics, such as family backgrounds.

Children benefit from several additional services in the home. One member of staff uses her skills as a qualified nutritionist to support children to understand the benefits of healthy eating. In addition, a counsellor visits the home once a week to engage children in a range of activities, including meal preparation. Children say that they value her visits and look forward to them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Management of the home is very stable. The registered manager has been in post for 16 years and her deputy for 12 years. They are both motivated and committed practitioners who justifiably take pleasure in the progress achieved by the children in their care.

Managers value the importance of staff development and succession planning. Two senior members of staff are currently studying for the national management qualification. In addition, management oversight of the home at weekends is now provided by a senior member of staff who has completed the management qualification. This ensures that consistent and effective decisions are undertaken at a vulnerable time for children.

Managers are ambitious to develop the service. Children are proud of the recent renovation and redecorating programme. Furthermore, managers recently commissioned a programme of art therapy. The resulting artwork completed by children now decorates the home's living room.

Staff morale is high. One staff member commented, 'This is the best job I have ever had.' Positive morale has produced a strong and consistent staff team, with no staff members leaving the service since the last inspection.

Recruitment procedures are safe and effective. Recruitment practice is supported by a volunteering programme for staff, which enables the home to assess suitability prior to a formal offer of employment.

Managers have addressed all the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. This has led to improvements in the home's practice in relation to the management of allegations against staff, the increased representation of children's views in documents and the widespread use of restorative sanctioning.

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

- The registered person should ensure that staff challenge the child's education or training provider if the child does not receive sufficient support to progress as outlined in their relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.12)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC028460

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Monica Thompson

Registered manager: Valerie Campbell

Inspector

Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

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