

1223501

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for four children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that it provides care for children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 2 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2019	Full	Good
27/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
18/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children living in this home receive consistent and well-planned care from a stable and committed staff team. The trusting relationships that have developed between staff and children enables them to feel safe and contributes to exceptional progress in their social, physical, emotional, and behavioural development.

Extremely positive relationships between staff and children were evident during the inspection. Children spoke warmly about the relationships with all staff working in the home. One professional said, 'I have been really impressed by how well [child] has been supported to establish positive relationships'.

Children live in a warm and welcoming family home that is decorated and finished to a high standard. They take pride in their home, and their bedrooms which are personalised to them. One child was in discussions with staff about changes they are planning to make and how their personal space could be best utilised. The home has plenty of room for children to spend time together or apart. The space has been utilised for children's interests such as a home gym and pool table. A garden project is underway with plans for children and staff to grow their own vegetables.

One child has moved into this home since the last inspection. Before moving into the home, they visited the house and other children. The child was provided with lots of information to help them understand more about the home. Children moving on from the home do so in a planned and supportive way, with staff maintaining the positive relationships they have formed during their time living in the home.

Children enjoy new experiences such as skiing and trips away with staff. Children are supported to take part in hobbies specific to their interests, such as drama and cadets. The registered manager and staff want to ensure that children leave the home with happy memories of their time here. Since the last inspection some of the places children have visited include Centre Parks and a mini-break in London. Staff ensure that they take photos of these experiences which are presented in albums for children to keep.

The registered manager and staff worked together effectively to ensure that children continued to make progress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside planned education, staff arranged a variety of activities to ensure that children continued to have fun. One child described the activities as 'really well planned'. As a result, children coped well with the restrictions placed on their lives.

All children living in this home are engaged with full-time education. Staff communicate effectively with teachers and education professionals to ensure that children receive the right support and are in the right placement. This means that children are invested in their education and make progress. One teacher said, 'they

[staff] offer tremendous support'. Children have clear aspirations for their future. One child is studying health and social care, and another has chosen to study this in the future. This has been shaped by their positive experiences living at this home. One child said, 'I see person centred care reflected in this home'.

Children's emotional and physical health is well considered, and staff support children to attend medical appointments routinely and when there are health concerns. One child wanted to reduce their prescribed medication. Staff worked closely with the child and specialist professionals to ensure this was done safely and in a planned way. The health professional described the staff team as, 'diligent and committed' to the child's health needs.

The registered manager is passionate about life-story work being undertaken so that children are able to make sense of their past experiences and often complex family dynamics. The registered manager and staff appreciate the significance of children's relationships with family and friends and promote positive time together. As a result, children have established a sense of family belonging and enjoy improved relationships with family and friends.

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

The safety and well-being of children is at the centre of staff's practice. Individual risk-management plans are regularly updated and signed by all staff to ensure that they are fully familiar with the risks to children and the strategies in place to ensure their safety.

Children have on occasion put themselves at risk by going missing from the home. During these incidents, staff go to great lengths to find children and encourage them to return home. Staff have built positive relationships with children's friends, who will share information that supports staff in their attempts to locate children. The registered manager and staff work closely with the police and other agencies to ensure that there are effective plans in place to reduce these risks. On their return, children are welcomed warmly. Staff ensure that children have access to an independent return home interview and that any information arising from their return is acted upon appropriately.

Children have trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. The children living in this home respect and listen to staff's advice and guidance. This is underpinned by effective key-working sessions covering relevant matters specific to the child. Furthermore, staff engage children in 'global education', where a range of topics are discussed, with practical activities to support this learning and make it meaningful to children. This means that children are informed of current risks within the community. One child's social worker said, '[staff] are both supportive but also direct about more difficult subjects'.

Behaviour management strategies in place for children are effective and well understood. Children benefit from consistent routines and boundaries. Staff

understand subtle changes in children's behaviours and body language and respond accordingly to prevent incidents from escalating. As a result, physical intervention is used rarely and only as a last resort in order to keep children safe. Records demonstrate the strategies used by staff to de-escalate these incidents and they are scrutinised by the registered manager. Debriefs with children are detailed and support children to reflect and consider alternative strategies staff could use to help them.

Staff know the children well and as such, they are able to identify likely changes in behaviour. The registered manager and staff are proactive in planning how to manage emerging concerns, seeking the input of all involved professionals while ensuring that the child's voice is heard. Information is shared with professionals in a timely manner. One child's social worker said, 'They advocate for [child] whilst being aware of the need to manage the risks to ensure his safety'.

Sanctions are used sparingly in this home as there is a culture of focusing on rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour. There is an effective rewards system in place that is regularly adapted to encourage children with their agreed targets. When sanctions are used, children are supported to reflect on their behaviours and explore alternative strategies that would help them.

Children know how to make a complaint, though none have been made since the last inspection over two years ago. Children said they would feel comfortable addressing issues with any staff member and feel confident that any complaints would be treated seriously.

Strong recruitment procedures are used in order to ensure that staff are properly vetted before being employed, so that unsuitable individuals do not work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. She has high aspirations for the children in her care and is a strong advocate for children. She is confident in appropriately challenging professionals to ensure that children receive the right support when they need it.

The registered manager is supported by a capable deputy manager and staff team, who share the same aspirations. This is a key strength of this service. Staff are knowledgeable, skilled and motivated to make a positive difference to children's lives and ensure that this home is a place that children want to live. Both children and staff are actively involved in bringing new ideas and ways of working to the team.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. This enables them to reflect on their own practice and the children's progress and ongoing needs. Inspectors spoke with staff who said that they feel supported working in this home. One member of staff said, 'I feel very appreciated. They [the registered manager and deputy

manager] will help and support me in anything I feel I need. I am proud to work here'.

Staff are motivated to progress within their roles and are allocated specific tasks to support their own development. Annual performance appraisals reflect the commitment to the future development of staff and also include feedback from children and professionals. One professional said, 'it is an absolute pleasure to work with them'.

Staff undertake regular training to support their continual development. All staff have completed mandatory training and staff were complimentary about the quality of the training available to them. A number of additional training courses have been delivered by individuals with first-hand experience of relevant topics. Staff have completed training specific to the individual needs of the children living in the home and spoke confidently about the positive impact this has on their day-to-day practice.

The registered manager routinely monitors the quality of the care given to children. She makes positive use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to support the continued development of the home. She actively seeks feedback from external professionals and responses were extremely positive. One social work professional said, 'I couldn't be happier with how far he [child] has come'.

The home's review of premises has recently been updated, with the registered manager consulting with key stakeholders to inform her assessment. However, the review should include risks that have been identified within the local area and the strategies for managing these.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1223501

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hexagon Care Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Beverley Haydock

Inspectors

Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector
Claire Hobbs, Social Care Inspector

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