

SC031220

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager position is vacant. The home recruited a manager in September 2023, but they have not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 February 2024

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	good
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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: 22 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
14/02/2022	Full	Good
27/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
13/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children in this home receive high-quality individualised care from staff who they have built trusting relationships with. These relationships are mutually respectful and are underpinned by therapeutic and restorative approaches of the manager and staff. This has meant that negative consequences are not required to manage behaviour. Instead, the children are encouraged to work towards rewards for their positive behaviour. The children actively buy into this and understand the reward system and the expectations of them.

All the children are in education, which is significant progress for most of them. Even though the children all attend the same school and live together, they have very good relationships with each other. The school headteacher said that communication with the home is excellent. The children are encouraged to achieve additional non-academic qualifications that equip them with life skills as well as supporting their academic attainment.

The manager and staff work hard to make sure that the children communicate effectively to ensure their voices are heard. The children are patient and respectful with each other, especially during daily meetings that they all attend. The manager and staff proactively ensure that they understand the communication needs of the children so that no child feels left out or unsafe while they are in the home.

Since the last inspection, there have been several transitions, both in and out of the home. They have all been extremely well planned to meet the needs of the children. The children that have moved on have done so successfully. The children that have moved in were able to visit and personalise their rooms, and they have all settled well. Children stay in touch with staff at the home, with one child saying, 'The home is amazing; they have helped me so much. They have pushed me forward. They taught me how to laugh again.'

There is a strong sense of community in the home. The relationships between staff and children are loving, humorous and friendly. There are rules and boundaries that the children must follow, and they understand that these are to keep them safe. Rules and boundaries do not prevent the staff from developing strong relationships with the children, who seek staff out for emotional warmth when they need it.

The manager and staff are dedicated to ensuring that the children maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Some of these people live considerable distances from the home; however, this is not seen as a barrier to them spending time together. The manager and staff are proactive about making appropriate arrangements and challenge professionals if they feel the arrangements do not meet the children's needs.

Currently, the garden area is not easily accessible or useable. The adjoining neighbour's lengthy renovation work is hindering the manager's plans to develop the garden. Plans need to be made to address this so the garden can be a useable, safe space that the children can access safely.

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

The manager and staff have a forensic understanding of all the risks associated with the children they care for. The experienced staff manage these risks well due to their skills and the relationships they have with the children. The manager and staff encourage the children to understand risk, and children are supported to take risks in a safe way. This means that in the long term, children are equipped with the skills and abilities to keep themselves safe.

Incidents are rare in the home. When they do happen, they are managed effectively by capable staff that are skilled in de-escalation techniques to prevent incidents increasing in severity. This approach has seen a high level of success and has meant that staff have not had to physically intervene with a child in this period. Staff are confident in their approach and know what to do should a child need to be held.

Risk assessments are individual and specific to each child. They are evidence-based and clear and identify ways of mitigating the current risks. Documents are routinely audited and updated should they need to be. When new risks are identified, these are assessed, and staff discuss the most appropriate way to manage that risk.

Children sometimes go missing from this home, although not very often. When this happens, staff take swift action to locate them and involve relevant agencies when necessary. Staff follow children's individual missing-from-home protocols and engage children in reflective discussions when they return home. This is to try and understand why they have gone missing and support them to reduce the risk of this happening again. Children are offered independent return home interviews following any missing-from-home incident.

The manager and staff work closely alongside the in-house programme psychologist to ensure a joined-up approach to implementing the therapeutic programme. The children engage well with this, and the programme psychologist ensures that she is available for the children. The language the home uses is therapeutic in nature, and staff are encouraged to broaden their understanding and knowledge by reading and applying up-to-date research and guidance which they are provided with by the manager.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Despite there being a change of manager in the home since the last inspection, leadership has remained strong and the home has remained stable. The manager has high expectations of his staff and ambitious aspirations for the children. He wants every child to leave the home well equipped with the skills they need to progress in life and achieve their goals. He speaks lovingly of the children who live in the home. He wants them to have strong role models and recognises the significant position that he and the staff have in achieving this.

The manager is a strong believer in professionals and families working together to achieve the best outcomes for the child. He and the staff work hard to forge relationships that are open, transparent and supportive. These relationships are the very cornerstone of children making the progress that they do. This is particularly important for families, who can visit the home and see where the children live. This relieves anxiety in families and is a foundation for collaborative working relationships.

The manager is described as supportive, knowledgeable and approachable by his staff. He strives to make staff feel valued, and as such, he places a lot of importance on their development, even if this results in losing good staff as they develop and move on. Staff receive constructive praise for their work, and they feel very much part of a team that is all working towards the same goals.

The manager has begun to implement some changes to the ethos of the home. He is keen for staff practice to adapt and change with emerging trends, and as such, he wants the children to be able to take more positive risks. He wants the children to be able to do this while they have the support and guidance of the staff.

Supervision is held regularly and is reflective in nature. It provides a space for the supervisor and supervisee to have an open and frank dialogue. Newer staff have supervision fortnightly, and established staff have supervision every month. All the staff find it helpful and beneficial to discuss how to improve their practice. Staff are encouraged outside of supervision to speak openly with the manager, and there is a culture of open communication which also extends to the children.

Team meetings are held every two weeks and alternately have a staff development focus or a child focus. These meetings are well attended and include specific training that is delivered to staff to enhance their skills. There are topics for discussion that reflect the needs of the children or subjects relevant to the home. The manager develops activities to complete with the staff to help them be more creative or to frame their thinking. These meetings are an effective use of staff time, and they enhance the comprehensive training package that the staff have access to.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. The home should be a homely, domestic environment, and the garden should be a safe and suitable environment for children to access. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC031220

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Rayns Way, Syston, Leicester LE7 1PF

Responsible individual: Christopher Bowker

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Gail McGann, Social Care Inspector
Jo Cansfield, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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