

1241023

Registered provider: Treehouse Educare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by an organisation that also operates a registered school on the same site. The children's home provides care for up to eight children, across two different homes. According to the provider's statement of purpose, one home supports four children with autism spectrum disorder, and the other home supports four children with a range of social and emotional difficulties.

Children can live at the homes full time or they may stay during term-time only. At the time of the inspection, six children were living at the children's home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision on this site.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Full	Good
04/09/2019	Full	Good
21/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last full inspection in December 2022, the provider has opened another children's home already registered under the same registration, on the same site, to care for children with social and emotional difficulties. A new manager has been appointed to the new home, and new staff recruited. Since then, three children have moved into this home, and one of these children has subsequently moved out in an unplanned way. This was due to staff not being able to safely manage the child's behaviour. The two remaining children are making good progress from their starting points.

In the pre-existing children's home, one child has moved out in a planned way since the last full inspection, and three children have moved in. Managers have completed good assessments of the children's needs before they have moved in, based on information from the placing authorities. Managers have considered children's opinions, risks and vulnerabilities alongside the children already living in the home. This has helped most children to feel prepared and ready for more children to move in.

Staff listen to children and explore their likes and interests. Children enjoy purposeful activities and leisure opportunities that help to build their confidence and self-esteem. Children attend local live music concerts, regular drama classes, horse riding lessons and a model railway club. This helps children to feel a sense of belonging and permanence.

Staff have positive relationships with the children and encourage them to attend school. Managers support children to understand the benefits of a good education and, where needed, advocate on their behalf with education professionals to increase time spent in school. One child's attendance has significantly increased since moving into the home. During the inspection, children were actively seen reading, doing coursework for their GCSEs, and talking passionately about their career aspirations and future opportunities. This foundation helps children to make good progress and supports them with structure and routine.

Staff ensure that children attend regular and routine health appointments. Managers have a good understanding of children's individual health needs and are working effectively with placing authorities to ensure that health services are timely, such as arrangements for annual health assessments and the transfer of clinical services.

Children's bedrooms are personalised with individually chosen wall colours and furnishings. Children said that they like their bedrooms and can request things they need.

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

Through staff's support and consistent care, children have developed trusting relationships with staff. These relationships help to keep most children safe, because

they can communicate their worries and fears to staff who respond appropriately and with their best interests at heart.

Staff working in the home are clear about procedures for responding to concerns regarding the safety of children, including allegations against staff. Child-protection concerns are immediately shared with the relevant agencies and managers address any necessary outcomes in a timely and appropriate way. A social worker said, 'Staff prioritised [name of child]'s and other children's safety.'

Most children move into the home with histories of trauma and can struggle to understand their feelings and emotions. For some children, consistent staff practice is helping them to manage their turmoil and to develop better coping skills and strategies. As a result, most children are developing stronger abilities to overcome their emotional challenges.

Safer recruitment practices are good and evidence that requests are made to obtain, and verify, references from the relevant employment history of potential new staff, and that overseas checks and Disclosure and Barring Service checks are carried out.

Most children said that they feel safe and happy living in the home. There are occasions when children feel that better responses from staff are needed, for example intervening more quickly when the dynamics between two or more children become unsettling. Managers are reviewing interactions and subsequent incidents, and there is good evidence of new strategies and support systems in place for staff. There are advocacy services for children; however, managers are not regularly making good use of these services when children may require additional independent support.

Staff support children to understand the risks online and how to keep themselves safe. For some children, there is good evidence of managers working collaboratively with children's professional networks in reviewing and monitoring the use of Wi-Fi-enabled devices. However, this good practice has not extended to all social media platforms. This is a missed opportunity for managers to respond appropriately when concerns arise and to reassure themselves that children are sharing online content safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is currently one registered manager responsible for the two children's homes. There is a plan for the newly appointed manager of the recently opened home to apply to register with Ofsted in April 2024. This is not a regulatory requirement, but managers feel that it will strengthen the leadership arrangements in providing a suitably trained and qualified registered manager in each home.

Staff said that they feel well supported and receive regular supervision and training. Managers work collaboratively with children's placing authorities to share and review incidents and take decisive measures to increase staffing levels and staff support when needed. A member of staff said, 'I have never felt so heard and supported in my role.'

The responsible individual visits the home regularly and has a good knowledge and understanding of children's individual support needs. Children know him by name, and he actively pursues and enjoys spending time with them. For example, on Christmas Day, he spent time with children and helped build a new electric model railway with one child. This approach endorses good leadership and installs positive messages to both children and staff.

Staff are working towards becoming qualified therapeutic practitioners. Staff said that their working environment is reflective, open and honest. However, the provider's therapeutic model is not fully embedded. This is due to staff still building relationships with children, gaining experience and attending the differing levels of trauma-informed training. Managers recognise a need to review the language within the home's statement of purpose to help reflect the current quality and delivery of staff practice.

This provider has been on a vast journey since the last full inspection. Managers and leaders have worked hard in recruiting suitable staff and carefully considering the impact of six new children moving in. However, the managers' monitoring of the quality of care being provided to children needs improvement. Managers are aware that this is an area for development and plan to work with the home's independent person to help ensure that the next review meets regularity standards.

There is an abundance of positive feedback from professionals who are happy with the quality of provision and the care children receive. One education leader said, 'The team are superb.' One child's parent and social worker were extremely complimentary about the child's move into the home, saying that the support had been individually tailored to meet the needs of the child. However, during the inspection, leaders and managers were informed of a concern raised by one parent. This was shared with leaders during the inspection to help resolve the concern.

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, The 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
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5))	20 May 2024
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality-of-care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (5))	20 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that, where needed, children have regular access to independent advocacy to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.18)
- The registered person must consider how and when they support and monitor children's internet access to help them use the internet safely. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)

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: 1241023

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Treehouse Educare Limited

Registered provider address: Boldings Brook, Dorking Road, Warnham, Horsham
RH12 3RZ

Responsible individual: Geoff Draper

Registered manager: Sabina Albert-Gil

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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