

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Unique reference number	1241789
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Horizon Care and Education Group Limited
Registered provider address	Venture House, Unit 12, Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock WS11 0LG

Responsible individual	Cheri Callow
Registered manager	Karly Campbell
Inspector	Corrinne Barker

Inspection date	14/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

1241789

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make excellent progress from their starting points. Staff provide young people with opportunities to make progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Staff support young people to attend education, advocating for them and working closely with partner agencies to ensure that young people achieve their academic potential.
- Relationships between staff and young people are very positive, and young people feel safe.
- Young people receive outstanding care and support, delivered by an experienced and highly skilled staff team.
- A stable staff team ensures that young people experience consistent care. Staff are able to implement clear expectations and boundaries.
- Behaviour management is effective. Through work on choices and consequences, young people increasingly take responsibility for their own actions and learn about socially acceptable behaviour.
- Risk to young people is managed well. Staff implement comprehensive risk and behaviour management plans in response to the risks associated with young people going missing from care.
- Staff are knowledgeable about risks posed to young people and receive appropriate support and training to enable them to carry out their work.
- The home is led by a skilled and experienced manager. She provides strong leadership and direction for the home.
- Management monitoring systems are robust and provide good oversight of the care provided.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person shall ensure that staff are 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. This is in particular reference to recording more detail following a physical intervention, and making the information more accessible for a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should build a strong safeguarding culture in the home where children are listened to, respected and involved in both the development of the home and decisions about the home. This is in reference to encouraging children and young people to make a stronger contribution to how the home is run. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home was re-registered with Ofsted in August 2016 to reflect a change in the limited company status within the organisation providing this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
This is the first inspection since registration		

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people make very good progress from their starting points, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff provide outstanding care for young people, which is consistent and dependable. This supports young people to develop secure and trusting relationships with them. Young people feel valued and listened to. All young people attend school or college, often after having had very poor educational experiences, with periods of exclusion, or complete disengagement from learning. Staff have been tenacious in supporting young people back into education. They advocate on behalf of young people and work closely with partner agencies to ensure that young people achieve their academic potential. Staff ensure that plans regarding education are reviewed on a regular basis, and they maintain contact with education providers to address issues as they arise. Young people have improved confidence and, in the main, a positive attitude towards learning. Staff encourage young people to have hobbies and interests outside the home and participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports. This provides further opportunities for young people to develop social skills, keep active and improve their physical and emotional well-being. Staff recognise small but significant progress and celebrate young people's achievements. One young person attends a drama club, where he is flourishing and has received praise for his attainment. Staff consider young people's sense of identity. Key-work sessions encourage young people to think about how they see themselves, and to develop a positive self-image. Staff give high levels of praise to young people, which helps to build their self-esteem. Achievable goals are set for young people, in line with their placement plans, which helps them to focus on the future. Young people are registered with universal health services, and access these as required. The home benefits from a clinical support team that provides regular consultation for staff. Young people living in the home have complex needs. Staff plan their care well, drawing upon sources of information and the young person's own voice to develop individualised care plans. Plans are of extremely high quality, easy to follow and regularly updated. There is evidence of close management oversight of young people's plans. Young people contribute to their plans, and engage in direct work with staff. This enables young people to get involved, and increases their investment in their own plans. Key-work sessions take place regularly.	

There is little investment from young people in meetings about how the home can be developed. Staff ascertain their views about the home, such as menu planning, activities that they would like to do and any grumbles that they have on an individual basis. However, greater participation from young people is needed to comprehensively gather their views and enable this to steer changes. A recommendation has been made to think creatively about how this could be improved.

Admissions to the home are managed well. Staff use impact risk assessments to ensure that young people being considered for admission are well matched alongside young people already living in the home. The manager and staff are able to identify when young people are not making progress, or when the home is not meeting a young person's needs. In these instances, swift liaison with placing authorities ensures that the young person's needs are considered and that the next steps can be agreed.

Staff are appropriately experienced and skilled and have an exceptionally good understanding of young people's individual needs. Staff provide nurturing care to young people, using attachment-based theory to guide their work and their interaction with young people. Staff who were observed during the inspection demonstrated excellent relationships with young people. Young people receive high levels of praise and encouragement, and achievements are celebrated.

Staff manage challenging behaviour very well. There is a clear framework for managing behaviour, which encourages young people to make positive choices and to think about their behaviour and the consequences. One member of staff spoke about how a young person is beginning to regulate his own behaviour. 'He is making progress, and he knows now that we care for him unconditionally. His outbursts don't last for as long as they did.'

Young people make excellent progress in becoming more self-aware and in developing the emotional maturity to help them manage difficult or overwhelming feelings. There is a strong emphasis on preparing young people for living independently and being aware of services that can help and support them.

Staff believe that the role of the home is to enable young people to develop age-appropriate self-care skills from the outset, and to build on these skills over time. Young people are given the opportunity to develop skills, such as food preparation and using public transport that are commensurate with their age and any specific vulnerabilities.

The home itself is a welcoming and homely environment. Young people have personalised, well-appointed bedrooms. The home is registered to accommodate three young people, and work is underway to develop the third bedroom.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home provides a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people. Staff are responsive to emerging risks. An example of this is reducing the potential risk from the road outside the home by adding gates at the end of the drive. Young people say that they feel safe in the home. This starts with trusting relationships with staff and a strong sense of being cared for and listened to. Young people can identify adults whom they trust and can talk to. Staff manage challenging behaviour well. They understand young people's behaviour and what emotions are being expressed when young people engage in harmful behaviour, or are aggressive. A member of staff spoke about the progress one young person has made since he came to the home. 'Certain issues and behaviours that would have led to an all-day incident are now managed well. We have achieved this through having consistent boundaries.' Staff praise young people when they make positive decisions, and challenge young people to think about the potential consequences of disruptive behaviours. This helps young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour and allows them to understand how their decisions can influence themselves and others. Young people develop increased awareness of socially acceptable behaviour. There are incidences of young people engaging in risk-taking behaviour, but they are better equipped to make safer decisions. Staff receive appropriate training and feel confident about their safeguarding role. They are aware of the risks associated with young people going missing from care and respond effectively. Staff follow multi-agency procedures and record these incidents very well. All relevant parties are informed. Management oversight of missing-from-care episodes provides the opportunity to identify patterns of behaviour or certain triggers, so that staff can reduce risk. Strategy meetings are convened when there are escalating concerns, or when patterns of the behaviour of going missing from care need to be assessed. Staff work very effectively with partners and implement comprehensive risk and behaviour management plans. One social worker said, 'Staff are creative in managing risk. Staff monitor missing-from-care episodes really thoroughly and manage risk well.' Young people invariably come to the home deemed to be at high risk of harm or having suffered significant harm. Within a short period of time, the risk posed to young people is reduced. Staff rarely use physical intervention to manage behaviour. In situations where physical intervention becomes necessary, staff use this safely and record this appropriately. Staff provide a written account of the situation and the hold used.	

They do not use more visual accounts of the hold, such as a diagram or picture, and as such the written description can be open to misinterpretation, or may mean very little to the young person retrospectively when reflecting on the incident. Debriefs for young people and staff are in place, and young people can reflect on the incident and express any negative feelings they have about being restrained. A recommendation has been made to make the recording of restraints easier to understand, with clearer explanation of how a young person has been held.

Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and are skilled in anticipating potential triggers. Young people learn to get along with each other, and with staff. When difficulties arise, staff encourage a restorative approach to quickly resolve tensions. This enables the young person to learn from the incident and to move on from it.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is highly skilled in her management role, and staff respect her strong leadership. Staff said that they feel supported by the manager and that they are part of an experienced and highly regarded team. They have access to a broad spectrum of training opportunities, some of which are provided in-house or externally. An increasing amount of training is made available online. Staff report that the training that they receive is at an appropriate level to support their practice, and all staff are familiar with safeguarding procedures. Staff promote young people's self-esteem through recognition of achievements, however small, and praise. There is evidence of research informing practice, and staff are beginning to work within a therapeutic framework based on attachment theory. Staff will receive training in therapeutic care over the coming months, which will enhance their skills further. Staff demonstrate very good insight into the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of the young people they care for. The manager has an excellent understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. She uses management monitoring systems to ensure that she has good oversight of the day-to-day care being provided. Management monitoring systems are robust. This is essential as the manager is dual registered, managing another home within the company alongside this home. This places a greater emphasis on having good systems in place to monitor progress while away from the home. Any shortfalls or areas for improvement are addressed promptly. Staff receive regular supervision and contribute to staff meetings. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice and share examples of success and areas for	

development. There is a strong sense of being a team.

Case records are clear and well maintained. They reflect the young person's day-to-day life and progress made against agreed plans. Records have good management oversight, enabling the manager to readily review young people's progress, as well as to assess the performance of staff.

The home is now registered to care for three young people, and this increase in numbers has caused a degree of anxiety for some staff. The manager is confident that staff can meet the needs of three young people effectively, and will keep staffing ratios under review.

Recruitment processes are managed well and reduce the risk of unsuitable adults working in the home. Agency staff are seldom used due to the home being fully staffed.

The manager promotes a strong ethos for the home, with young people being central to everything that the staff do. The manager ensures that the home is delivering care in line with the statement of purpose. She has high expectations and leads by example. Feedback from placing social workers is very positive, with particular praise for staff communication.

The manager is ambitious for young people and works in partnership with others through positive professional relationships to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. Staff also have the confidence to challenge partners on behalf of the young people when necessary. Leadership and management are outstanding, in response to the progress young people make from their starting points, and the determination across the staff team to continually improve the service provided.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other, and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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