

1241789

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to three children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified.

There are currently three children living at the home.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 March 2024

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 **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2023	Full	Good
22/02/2022	Full	Good
16/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a home that feels homely and inviting. Children have had the opportunity to influence the decoration of the home and how the spaces are used. This has meant that a separate games room has recently been established. The home is a spacious environment where children can choose whether to spend time together or apart.

Children have warm and relaxed relationships with staff and the manager. They will seek out staff in the home and are keen to chat with them about their day. Professionals share that children are benefitting from consistent and warm responses from staff. Children understand that they can rely on staff, and this encourages them to talk openly with them. Consequently, all children have developed a greater ability to regulate their emotions.

Children are supported to maintain and nurture relationships with family and other people important to them. Staff recognise the importance of adapting plans, especially as children prepare to return to live with family members or onto independence. Preparation for when children join and leave the home is excellent, with a focus on building children's resilience and self-belief. One child has been recently supported to move successfully onto independence. Considered work was done to ensure he was well prepared for this move and had what he needed to feel settled in his new home.

Children's care plans and behaviour support plans are thorough and are compiled collaboratively with the children. This ensures staff understand how children need to be cared for. Plans guide staff on the practical steps needed to care for children appropriately. Where more bespoke ways of working with children are needed these are quickly developed. An example of this was creating a communication chart with a child with additional needs, helping them to both recognise and express how they are feeling.

Children are regularly asked their thoughts and wishes, and one to one discussions happen regularly. Staff are proactive to make changes following these discussions and this reassures children that their feelings are listened to and validated by staff.

Children enjoy home based activities and choose to spend a lot of their time on computer games. This has the potential for children to become quite socially isolated, especially where children do not attend education full time. Children should be offered a variety of opportunities and encouraged to widen their interests and experiences.

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

Children do not present with challenging or risk taking behaviours. Feedback seen from children reflects that they feel safe at the home and that they enjoy living there. Children are settled, and this has resulted in there being no incidents of missing, physical intervention or self-harm during the inspection period.

Children's risk assessments are clear, detailed and guide staff on the actions they should take should risk taking behaviours occur. Where incidents have occurred these have been well documented and organised. Staff act proactively to respond to escalating incidents and understand how to keep children safe.

When challenging situations happen at the home staff know how to distract and de-escalate situations. Staff understand the importance of giving children space where this is appropriate. Children and staff are offered debriefs following incidents. Children engage with these, can reflect and are remorseful for their behaviour. Staff are keen to rebuild relationships and assure children that they are cared for.

There has been one allegation made during the inspection period, this was carefully explored by the manager at a pace and level manageable for the child. Good exploration meant that some excellent follow on work was identified and completed. Staff and the child now have an agreed way that the child can communicate how he is feeling moving forward.

The manager should ensure that auditing of the home and staff supervisions reflect effectively on how positive practice from staff is encouraging children's engagement and preventing serious incidents happening with any regularity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a committed and enthusiastic manager. She has been a consistent person for staff and children and is someone that they both look to for advice. The manager is passionate about the children in her care and how she can support them to reach their potential. The manager's good communication and strong advocacy for children was consistently recognised by both staff and involved professionals.

The manager has enabled a sibling group to live together at the home. Staff were able to recognise the exceptional progress they have made there. They were previously socially anxious and rarely attended school. They are now effectively able to communicate their feelings, have both engaged in educational provisions and are developing their independence skills. The manager has also ensured that they have been able to stay in touch with an older sibling who has recently left care, recognising the importance of this network of support as they move towards adulthood.

There is a supportive culture at the home, staff pull together as a team and cover shifts where needed. They recognise that this offers consistency to the children and

prevents them being cared for by staff who do not know them well. Staff love working at the home and several staff members described the team as being like a family. This ensures a positive environment for children live in.

Staff engage monthly in meaningful team meetings. These start with discussions about the children and allow space for staff to discuss and learn from each other. Innovative tasks from the manager during team meetings assures her of staff's competency in safeguarding children. This ensures that meetings are a place where practice can be improved or strengthened. Staff are also up to date with their training and required qualifications.

The manager is proactive to act upon recommendations from independent auditors at the home. She has good oversight of the home to ensure that shortfalls are quickly addressed and that continual improvements can be made.

Some gaps were identified in the safer recruitment processes for staff. Whilst the manager had requested appropriate checks to be completed these had not been received within timescales. The manager cannot therefore be assured that all staff working within the home remain safe to be working with children.

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, 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
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) This particularly relates to ensuring that Schedule 2 information is available regarding all staff.	22 April 2024

Recommendations

- Children's home staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves as part of the homes plan for their care. This specifically refers to ensuring that children are supported to engage in hobbies and activities outside of the home. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. This specifically refers to ensuring that the manager reflects on the positive impact of the care offered in the home by staff. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: 1241789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Horizon Care and Education Group Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 12, Venture House, Prospect Business Park,
Longford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 0LG

Responsible individual: Luke Taylor

Registered manager: Jodi Wheatstone

Inspector

Louise Copping, social care inspector

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