

1247244

Registered provider: Watermead Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children aged between seven and 14 years on admission, who require a medium-to-long-term placement. The children will have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2020 and is currently undertaking the required level 5 qualification.

Due to COVID 19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 May 2021

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	good
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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: 22 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
28/08/2018	Full	Good
25/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are cared for by a team who know them extremely well. Staff skilfully use their relationships to consistently apply boundaries that enable the children to feel safe and secure. This approach has ensured that children's behaviour improves, and school attendance is the norm. The interactions between children and staff are full of warmth and care. It is evident that children feel at ease at home and can be themselves. During this visit, this included lots of laughter and impromptu singing.

Both children currently living in the home are thriving. Staff speak about children's progress with pride and joyfulness. The feedback from professionals is complimentary, particularly about the team's creativity in helping children feel included and empowered.

The team has expertly helped the younger, newer child to navigate through an unsettled period in the home, that saw a decline in his behaviour. He is now settled and attending a local school. Staff are working closely with the teachers to support the school with managing his changeable mood and behaviours. This joint approach is a positive example of partnership working.

The other child is due to undertake her GCSE examinations. Having lived here for several years, she says she would happily stay until she is 18. The team is gradually preparing her for moving into an adult placement. This long-term transition planning is to ensure that she is truly prepared for the move when it occurs.

Transitions into the home are managed creatively, for example through the use of video tours. The team has successfully achieved reunification with a child and his family. This is extraordinary given his initial care plan was for him to remain in residential care until adulthood. His family praised the staff, saying, 'Thank you for making him smile again, for hugging him in sad times and laughing with him (or at him) in the good [times].'

Children are supported and encouraged to become and remain fit and healthy. Staff support children to make healthier choices. A child's social worker praised staff for proactively promoting healthy eating ahead of the need being highlighted by a medical professional at a recent appointment.

Children have access to psychological support through an external company. The clinical team also works with the staff to identify alternate strategies and approaches to use in their direct work with children. The theoretical approach that underpins the team's work is apparent in all aspects of their work with the children.

Staff ensure that children have experiences like their peers. This includes birthday parties where friends and staff (past and present) attend. These experiences demonstrate to children that they are valued.

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

Since the last inspection, two children have left the home at short notice and without a good quality transition to their new placements. Problems in the matching and admission processes meant that these children did not have successful placement endings. The manager has carried out a thorough review of staff practice. This has led to positive changes in the matching processes used ahead of a child moving into this home. More care is taken in gathering information about the children and in the practical plans for their admission.

There have also been changes within the staff team. Recruitment practice has been strengthened so that new staff have a better understanding of the work; this includes the principles and theoretical basis for their work. The staff team now reflects the organisation's approach to caring for children. This is improving the quality of care provided.

Staff have been creative with activities to occupy the children during the various national lockdowns. These have enabled children to build a deeper rapport with staff.

Children have personalised their bedrooms. This has encouraged them take personal ownership of their rooms and look after their possessions even when they become upset or frustrated.

During a less settled period in the home, there was an increase in the use of physical interventions. Many of these consisted of blocking the way and distraction rather than actual holds. However, it is positive to note that there has been a marked decrease in recent months. The manager has conducted a review of the incidents and holds to ensure that lessons are learned and implemented to avoid similar situations occurring.

There is evidence that children have become safer through direct work and conversations about areas of concern. Children's risk assessments are updated to include any previously unidentified risks. The manager encourages the team to be creative in how they address risk. This enables children to take responsibility for their actions and responses as they would in a family setting. This means encouraging children to speak openly and frankly with staff to enable them to safely recognise and manage risks online and/or in the community. One child has been open in her discussions about her use of her mobile phone. These discussions are helping her to stay safe and she now recognises how she has historically been at risk.

Staff training is monitored through a team matrix. It covers mandatory and developmental training. The training provided is enhancing staff practice and their understanding of how to safeguard children. Staff have an awareness of their safeguarding duties; however, this could be further enhanced. For example, through additional clarification of roles and responsibilities when on shift. This would ensure that all staff know who the person would be to lead in a safeguarding situation if no manager or senior was on shift.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The current registered manager has worked for the company for several years. She was appointed as manager in January 2020 and registered with Ofsted in March 2020. She is completing the Level 5 qualification. She is confident, competent, extremely dedicated and expects high standards from the staff. The team has every confidence in her leadership.

The manager has successfully established a committed and hardworking team. They are unified by the manager's passion for the ethos of the company. This passion extends into her relationships with the children and she has an outstanding knowledge of their needs.

The manager has a thorough understanding of the progress of the children and is ambitious for them and their futures. The manager has made an impressive contribution to their plans, ensuring that their voices are heard and acted on. She actively challenges any actual or perceived shortfalls. This enables children to achieve in all areas of their lives under her leadership. One child has started play therapy and is investing in that process. The manager's level of commitment to this child has been significant in achieving this.

The staff team is inspired to carry out their work to a high standard. There is a thorough induction for new staff with regular reflective supervision. Training is relevant to their needs and those of the children. There are opportunities for further training and development for all staff. The team benefits from clinical supervision where they feel able to discuss the impact of their work. This has helped to maintain a core of stable and cohesive staff who often go above and beyond their roles to offer highly individualised care to children.

The manager has an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She has reflected with the team on the challenges presented in recent months and identified pertinent learning from this. This has been implemented into the creation of new systems and ways of working. An example is a new recording system which ensures increased levels of accountability relating to key safeguarding practices and procedures.

The manager takes great pride in how she involves children in their care. She leads by example by regularly consulting with the children and acting on what they say. Children's lives have improved significantly because of the care they receive, and they have considerable trust in the manager.

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: 1247244

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Watermead Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 135, 1 Hanley Street, Nottingham NG1 5BL

Responsible individual: Tamsin White

Registered manager: Kerrie-Louise Moore

Inspectors

Sonia Hay, Social Care Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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