

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 and accommodation for up to three children aged between seven and 14 years on admission, who require a medium- to long-term placement. The children have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties which may result in them having complex, multiple needs.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 January 2020

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	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: 28 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2018	Full	Good
25/10/2017	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61 paragraph 13.1). In particular, ensure that supervision sessions occur at a frequency which is in line with the home's policies and procedures.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are making exceptional progress and said that they feel happy and settled. Their interactions with staff are warm and nurturing. Children feel loved and cared for, and are thriving on the consistency, boundaries and routines that staff have established. The stimulating and well-planned personalised care offered to children comprehensively considers their needs, targets, developmental stages and emotional state. A child enthusiastically described how radically his behaviour has improved since he moved in. His parent said, 'He is like a different child. 100% improved behaviour and this is down to how they [staff] are with him, how they make him feel and just being open with him.' Professionals involved in the children's lives echoed these sentiments when they spoke about the progress of all the children.

Children have well-established routines that centre around education. A school place was quickly identified for a new child. This meant that, despite her move, the number of school days she missed was minimal. The children have very good attendance rates.

Great emphasis is placed on the children's emotional well-being. This is monitored and tracked using questionnaires and self-assessments which are completed, separately, by children and their key workers. The results are used to assess how well the staff understand their key child's emotional state and the scores determine some of the topics for direct work in the following month. This ensures that matters are followed up and discussions are purposeful.

The home is creative in its use of specialist services that include therapeutic sessions and innovative programmes such as gardening schemes. These enable the children to explore a wide range of therapeutic methods to channel their feelings and any negative thoughts/moods.

Staff actively listen to the children. This enables children to realise that their views and wishes are important and will be acted on. Staff are passionate advocates for the

children and assist them in voicing their opinions on matters such as their care plans. This has meant that children feel supported and included in decisions about their future.

A social worker praised the staff for facilitating an increase in family visits for a child, as it is enabling the child to maintain strong family bonds. The children are supported to prepare for their next move. This tends to be a return to family or a move to a long-term foster family. This is planned in conjunction with the child, their family and professionals to ensure that it is conducted at the child's pace.

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

The team's work with the children is underpinned by several theoretical approaches that assist with understanding how to work positively with children who have experienced trauma. This approach, coupled with the established relationships the children have with the staff, is helping children to become increasingly safe.

Children spoke positively about how they are better able to manage their emotions and feel less likely to have negative outbursts. A child spoke proudly about being more able to manage his anger since commencing therapy sessions. Staff, through their in-depth knowledge of the children, manage negative behaviours effectively. This includes identifying the triggers for these behaviours and successfully utilising de-escalation techniques. These skills were particularly vital when the home experienced a spike in the frequency and intensity of incidents. Many of these incidents were attributable to external factors. Once these issues were identified, the level of incidents rapidly diminished.

Similarly, de-escalation and the relationships between children and staff were successfully utilised when a child with a history of going missing moved in. The home experienced an initial spate of missing-from-home episodes. These reduced in number as a result of the creative use of agreed periods of free time, and the child responding positively to being trusted to return on time and to answer phone calls from staff. There have been no recent episodes of missing.

Children have built trusting relationships with the adults who are caring for them. They are proud to demonstrate that they now behave in a way which enables the staff to trust them too. This includes having unsupervised time in the community and using the internet and social media, sometimes unsupervised, in a safe and responsible way.

The open discussions about all aspects of risk that may occur in the community and online enhance the children's and the team's knowledge and understanding. This openness is helping the children to become more aware of how to avoid risky situations. Children can identify who they would approach should they need to raise any matters of concern.

Staff training is monitored and reviewed to ensure that staff are continually working with current knowledge. This means that they are better equipped for their role.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager recently left. The new manager has been the interim manager on two previous occasions. While she was in her role as deputy manager, the managers worked together to ensure that as a leadership team they led by example. Her appointment provides continuity for the children and the staff. The staff spoke very positively about her and described her as amazing, hands on and approachable. She is currently undertaking the level 5 qualification course and has begun the registration process.

Importance is placed on maintaining the well-being of the staff team and this is borne out in the high retention rates now being achieved. The manager conducts regular file audits and is constantly reviewing all aspects of the recording systems. This ensures that all the necessary information is easily accessible and is an improvement that addresses the two recommendations made in the last report.

Staff said that they have regular informal discussions with the managers, and have access to independent clinical supervision. On occasion, staff have not received formal supervision at a frequency that is in keeping with the home's policies and procedures. This prevents them from having the benefit of the formal reflective time these sessions provide.

The managers ensure that they and the team actively challenge poor responses and decision-making. A recent example involved assisting a child to engage a legal representative to escalate a formal complaint that he has lodged against the police.

Equality and diversity are promoted during day-to-day interactions, as well as through various quizzes and activities. This approach creatively assists in solidifying the children's experience and knowledge.

The feedback received from a family member and various professionals commended the work of the team. They said that the professional relationships that they have forged make co-parenting and partnership working easy. Each described the transformative impact that living in the home has had on the children's lives, ambitions and goals. A social worker praised the staff for sharing their successful strategies with schools and family members. This shared knowledge enables the children to receive a consistent response from all of the adults involved in their care, and enables children to feel settled and secure in all settings.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children

and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have 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.

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: Post vacant

Inspector

Sonia Hay: social care inspector

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