

1251076

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 provides care for up to four children with learning disabilities. The home is owned and managed by a private organisation. The manager was registered with Ofsted in 2017. He is a qualified social worker and holds a management 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: 22 to 23 June 2021

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: 4 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2019	Full	Good
31/01/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/11/2018	Full	Good
14/02/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who come to live at the home usually settle in quickly and begin to make small but notable progress. Planned transitions into and out of the home are very successful. The detail and forethought that goes into the planning is exceptional. For one child, staff took them on several trips in the car to build up their tolerance for a long journey to their next home. The same members of staff and the same car were used for every trip and the staff made adjustments to the plan as they learned what best met the child's needs.

Children's health needs are managed well. Their needs are quickly identified when they move in and staff are proactive in seeking external advice. For one child, this meant that improvements to his diet, following advice from a dietician, were implemented within a couple of weeks of him moving in. Health records are clear and updated following every consultation or appointment.

All children attend school regularly.

Children are supported to see people who are important to them. Staff take children to see their families and will provide support during the visit, if required. Staff work closely with families and professionals to make the visits enjoyable and staff adapt the nature of their support to each situation. Families appreciate the ongoing support that staff provide in attending meetings and appointments.

There is a strong focus on improving children's communication. Each child has a document detailing how they communicate, and communication is a common theme within care planning documents. Visual symbols are used throughout the home and children use these spontaneously to make choices. However, children's records are not always clear about how they are supported with their communication, which makes it difficult to track the progress children have made.

Children have made good use of the activities within the house and garden during lockdown. However, as lockdown has eased, staff have been cautious about taking children out into the community. Staff are not always creative and proactive in encouraging children to take part in activities.

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

Children have positive and trusting relationships with staff. Children spontaneously seek staff out for physical contact. The staff response is warm and appropriate.

Children are helped to manage their behaviour by staff who know and understand them very well. Behaviour support plans are clear and specify triggers for behaviour and how staff should respond. Permissible restraints for each child are detailed in their plans. Restraints are used, but they are used appropriately and for short

durations, usually for under a minute. Records of restraint do not always include information about the steps staff take to de-escalate situations. This makes it difficult for the manager to review the effectiveness of the behaviour support plans.

Although safer recruitment procedures are in place, they are not applied rigorously with regards to the verification of references. Verification of references is not always sought from previous positions involving work with children or vulnerable adults. In addition, it is unclear if the person providing the verification can comment on any safeguarding matters.

The physical environment is safe and secure. Children's bedrooms are adapted to meet individual risks and needs. There are very few environmental restraints used. Some children's wardrobes are locked, in line with their risk assessment. A stair gate at the kitchen door is only used at certain high-risk points in the day.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager and the deputy manager have substantial experience of working with disabled children. They are passionate about the service and the support it offers to children and families. Detailed risk assessments, and measures put in place, have kept the children and the staff safe during the pandemic.

Children are supported by an experienced and qualified staff team. Staff retention is good, so children have consistency from those who support them.

A child was admitted in an emergency earlier in the year. It was quickly identified that it was not a suitable move as the child's needs were incompatible with the existing group of children. The child left the home after a few weeks. The manager has reflected on the move and acknowledged that it was a poor decision to take the child without sufficient information.

The emergency placement affected staff morale; some supervisions and team meetings were missed. Since then, supervisions and team meetings have returned to the regular frequency established prior to the placement. Staff are confident that the current children are well-matched. Staff feel supported by the management team.

Ongoing training helps staff to keep up to date with their knowledge and skills. Not all the training is specific to supporting disabled children. The mandatory company training and induction tends to focus on the needs of non-disabled children. The manager has to request relevant training, which can take time to be organised.

Partnership working is effective. The manager and staff work closely with other agencies to ensure that children receive holistic care.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix)) In particular, this relates to staff having specific training to meet the needs of the children. This includes, but is not limited to, communication training such as Makaton.	2 August 2021

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— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that verification of references is sought from all previous positions involving work with children or vulnerable adults. Additionally, that the verification is provided by somebody able to comment on any safeguarding matters.	2 August 2021
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. Staff should be proactive and creative in making these activities available. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint always detail the measures used by staff to avoid the use of the restraint. The record should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or

trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: 1251076

Provision sub-type: 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: Emma Carrington

Registered manager: Paul White

Inspector

Alison Marshall, Social Care Inspector

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