

1256610

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

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 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 August 2017

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: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children are making good progress from their starting points. They have built positive relationships with staff and peers and, as a result, have grown in confidence and developed good social skills.
- Staff have supported children to reduce concerning behaviours and develop skills to manage their feelings and relationships.
- Home staff, social workers and police work well together to ensure the safety and well-being of children living in the home.
- Staff benefit from structured team meetings and coaching sessions. These have improved their knowledge and skills and supported good partnership working.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Further work is needed to ensure consistent, good quality record keeping by staff.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection since being re-registered under new ownership.

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
Fitness of workers The registered person may only employ an individual to work in a children's home if the individual has attained the appropriate qualification by the relevant date (2 years after the date in which the individual started working in a care role in a home). (Regulation 32 (2)(3)(b) and (5)(a))	05/01/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children in this home are receiving good quality care and are achieving positive outcomes. All children have full-time education placements. Two children are starting college courses. The education lead for the provider has ensured that careers advice has been made available to inform decisions about college courses.

One child achieved excellent results in her recent exams. Staff supported and

encouraged her to attend after-school revision sessions. There are good routines in place for all children. Staff have consistent expectations about education attendance and completing homework. As a result, children have made good progress from their starting points.

Children have positive relationships with staff and peers. They have opportunities to participate in activities and holidays. Two children and some of the staff have joined a singing group. One child attends sea cadets every week. Children have improved social skills and confidence because they take part in a range of activities and have good education attendance.

Staff encourage and support peer friendships and regular contact with family members. A parent reported that 'staff have been amazing' in arranging and supporting her contact with her daughter.

Social workers confirm that they receive a weekly summary of each child's progress and that they are contacted promptly about any significant events or safeguarding concerns.

The inspector observed all staff providing nurturing care, being attentive to children's needs and being sensitive to children's moods. One child reported that she wished she had come to live in this home sooner. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual histories, culture, heritage and vulnerabilities. These inform care plans.

Staff support children to develop independence and life skills. Two children are completing an accredited independence skills package that will help them to secure independent accommodation in the future.

Each child has a detailed health plan. Children attend preventative health appointments. Staff use a range of tools to successfully improve children's emotional well-being. Staff are good at engaging children so that they are able to talk about their emotions and feelings.

All children have clear targets as part of their care plans. These are generally about overcoming barriers to achieving or staying safe. Staff have individual sessions with children, often informal, to discuss any concerns and to work on targets. One child has received information about, and discussed the impact of, substance misuse. Another child has discussed positive peer relationships. In this way, staff are supporting children to make good lifestyle choices and raising their awareness of risk.

A social worker for a child who has recently moved into the home reported that: 'She has been on holiday, she has had a lovely time. She looks different. As a result of living in this home, she is more relaxed. She is taking pride in her appearance. Her self-esteem has increased.'

This home has a good record of consulting with children. There are regular children's meetings. Children know how to complain, although they all said they feel comfortable talking to the managers and staff about any concerns. Practice would be strengthened

further by consistently recording the response to children's requests and suggestions, including a clear explanation if a request has not been actioned. Social workers report that staff advocate on behalf of children and are proactive in following up recommendations from planning meetings to prevent delay.

Staff encourage children to be responsible citizens in the community. They provide opportunities to engage in the local community. Children have been involved in a number of charity and goodwill events. They are proud of this and were happy to show the inspector photographs.

The provider has developed referral processes in order to improve information-sharing prior to admissions. A social worker and child were very positive about the admission process. A child said that she felt welcomed and listened to. The social worker and child reported that staff took time to explain the expectations for children in a sensitive way. This has helped this child to settle and build positive relationships.

The home environment is comfortable. It is child-centred and reflects the children's preferences and personalities.

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

Children in this home are increasingly safe because of the care they receive. They develop healthy relationships and have positive role models.

There has been an increase in unauthorised absences from the home following changes in a particular child's circumstances. Managers and staff in the home follow all procedures carefully, keep in touch with the police and social worker, proactively search and maintain contact with the child whenever possible. The social worker for the child reported that: 'Despite the challenges, they have good arrangements in place to keep this child safe.' The manager is tenacious in ensuring that there is shared, up-to-date information about the recent increase in risks for this child. Her care plan is subject to regular scrutiny and a multi-agency safeguarding plan is in place.

All children have detailed risk management and behaviour management plans. These are shared with children and they contribute to them. Some children are assessed as having a complex combination of risks. Staff refer to, and work with, specialist services when appropriate. For example, the local child and adolescent mental health service consults with staff about self-harming behaviours and low self-esteem. Staff contribute to ongoing assessments of children's needs and risks. One child has engaged positively with work to address substance misuse. Social workers report that children are more resilient, that there are reduced incidents of self-harming behaviour and that peer relationships are better as a result of living in this home.

The manager acknowledged that for one child behaviour management strategies had not been effective. This child has moved on from the home to independent accommodation. Staff and managers have reflected on this child's experiences and have introduced measures to support staff in the management of challenging behaviour.

Staff are trained in the use of physical restraints, and in de-escalation and distraction techniques. Staff follow the very clear restraint policy at all times. An external review of any restraints always takes place. In addition, the manager reviews all incidents. Staff are skilled at de-escalating behaviours so that restraint is not required. This home has a very low incidence of staff having to physically intervene to keep a child or staff member safe.

No complaints or allegations have been made. However, staff are trained in how to respond to allegations and have a good understanding of safeguarding protocols. The manager is experienced in referring allegations to the designated officer when appropriate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is an experienced and qualified manager. Her vision is for children to enjoy positive experiences and to achieve well while living in this home. She also wants the staff and service to continuously develop and improve. The staff team shares this vision.

The manager has developed team meetings so that they are increasingly well structured and purposeful. Each meeting has a theme or delivers a coaching session and includes an update about children's needs. As a result, staff have enhanced their contributions to meetings and training sessions. The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the ethos and objectives of the home, and of the regulations and quality standards to support them to deliver good quality care.

Staff report that they feel well supported and motivated. They know how to raise concerns and complaints. Supervision arrangements are in place and supervision is prioritised for new staff. However, a small number of staff have experienced some gaps in supervision recently. A recommendation is made to address this.

The manager has changed the staffing structure to strengthen the management team. This has ensured a good balance of skills and experience across the team and the new structure is working well. Managers have recently reviewed the workforce development plan to ensure appropriate succession planning.

The manager has confidently addressed a staff performance concern and she has delegated some management tasks to her deputies. This supports staff development and enables her to focus on the improvement of quality assurance systems.

Staff have the mandatory care qualification or are currently receiving training to achieve it. However, one member of staff has not completed the training within the required timescales. Staff are well trained. Safeguarding training is part of the induction process and staff receive regular refresher updates of this training. Staff have a good understanding of policies and procedures to assess and address vulnerability to sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse and online abuse.

The home's development plan takes account of recommendations from the independent visitor. This means that staff are clear about areas for improvement and how these improvements will be achieved.

The managers and staff have reviewed the outcomes for a child who left the home prior to this inspection. This has informed developments in admission processes and demonstrated that there is a learning culture in the team. All staff and managers are keen to develop practice to ensure good outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems monitor outcomes for children and the progress children are making. This inspection found some inconsistencies in children's records. For example, the response to children's requests was not always clear and actions following individual key-work sessions were not always captured. This means that on some occasions there was not clear evidence of a response to children's requests and views. The manager has identified this issue as an area for improvement within existing development plans.

Partner agencies say that there are effective joint-working arrangements. The manager can demonstrate that she has challenged partners when there has been a delay in progressing a child's plans, or a delay in accessing a resource that would benefit a child. It is clear that staff and managers are proactive in liaising with education and health colleagues, as well as the police, youth offending service and voluntary organisations, to support children to make progress.

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: 1256610

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Registered provider address: Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley BR1 1LT

Responsible individual: Joanne Collins

Registered manager: Nicol Orme

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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