

1257706

Registered provider: Gravitas Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation which provides care and accommodation for up to two children or young people. The children and young people require care to support their emotional difficulties.

The new manager was registered in March 2019. She has the relevant experience and qualifications to work with children and young people.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2019

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	good
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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: 3 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, remove the wood and hazards that are over the perimeter fence of the garden to make the area safe.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people thrive due to the highly individualised care provided by the staff team. The children and young people make exceptional progress in education, health, independence and keeping safe. The regular review of each child's care and progress makes sure that the goals and targets set for them are achieved. The children and young people benefit greatly from having a core team of staff who are child focused and dedicated. The staff make sure that the children and young people have enjoyable childhoods and make progress in a nurturing, family-style environment.

The children and young people respond very positively to having clear routines and boundaries and have significantly benefited from the strong and enduring relationships that the staff have built with them. The development of trust in those who care for them enables the children and young people to consistently listen to the advice and guidance given which keeps them safe and enables them to flourish.

The staff have a robust approach to education which has brought enormous benefits to the children and young people. For example, for two children, their attendance at school has risen to 100% from 20% prior to their admission. For the children recently admitted to the home, the staff are working with the local authority with vigour to secure full-time school placements. In the interim, a tutor has been appointed to ensure their primary education needs are met.

The children and young people respond extremely positively to all the strategies implemented by the staff and guidance from health professionals to address some chronic and longstanding health issues. The children and young people are empowered to take responsibility for their own health. As a result, they have gained the confidence to attend routine health checks and take responsibility for themselves where they

previously lacked self-care skills. This has brought about significant improvements in their physical health in a short space of time. For one young person this has included radical improvements in communication skills.

The children and young people enjoy positive relationships with their families. This is a result of the staff working tirelessly to rebuild and maintain strong and positive relationships with children and young people's families. Staff consistently keep parents and others up to date with the progress and achievements of their children. In addition, the staff have worked with parents, over and above their normal duties, to improve their parenting skills, role model the care they provide in the home, and provided support to set rules and boundaries. This has been exemplary work and played a significant part in supporting children to return to their family home and live with their parents.

There is an enormous focus on ensuring that the children and young people broaden their life experiences. The staff recognise when children and young people suffer from low self-esteem and when their confidence needs to be built. The staff take appropriate steps to support the children and young people which enables them to feel able to participate in activities with others, something they have not done previously. The support given by the staff has made sure that the children and young people have participated in a wealth of new leisure activities, hobbies and interests that promote positive social engagement. This sustained increase in confidence has strengthened their awareness of the community in which they live. There is a very wide range of activities that the children and young people have engaged in. In addition, the children and young people have been on holiday, and enjoyed the experience immensely.

The children and young people are continually supported to learn and develop a good level of independence skills that are appropriate to their age. These tasks to support independence are allocated appropriately depending on the children and young people's age and understanding. The children and young people enjoy preparing and cooking meals and baking.

The home is clean and is decorated and furnished to a very high standard. The children benefit greatly from living in the comfortable and homely atmosphere that mirrors a family environment. However, the rear patio area is bare and uninviting. Wood that has been discarded at the back of the fencing should be removed.

Importance is given to ensuring that the views and opinions of the children and young people are sought. Children and young people are regularly consulted about weekly activities and the meals that they want on the weekly menu. They have access to an independent advocate. The advocate assists further in ensuring that the children and young people's wishes and feelings are well-understood.

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

The care provided for the children and young people keeps them very safe. The staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of keeping children and young people safe, and

implement fully safeguarding procedures. The staff know how to manage and care for a child or young person if they make a disclosure. This supports the continued protection and safety of children and young people.

The staff have individualised knowledge of the risks and vulnerabilities that relate to the children and young people in their care. These risks include going missing from home, being vulnerable in the community, risks to child sexual exploitation, internet safety and the potential use of illegal drugs. The staff can clearly articulate the strategies that they use to reduce or eliminate the dangers. Any changes in the identified risks prompt a risk assessment review and update. In-depth work on how to keep safe has been undertaken with the children and young people. As a result, the number of incidents relating to risk-taking behaviour is low, which is a sustained reduction from their starting points. These care practices help greatly to keep the children and young people safer.

The number of episodes in which the children and young people go missing from home is low. The staff work in conjunction with the police, and promptly implement the missing-from-care protocols. The children and young people receive return home interviews from an independent person to ascertain the reasons why they left the home. The staff continue to work with the children and young people around risk reduction. Relationships with close family members are promoted and are positive.

The children and young people receive lots of praise, reassurance and rewards, and are given a consistent message about positive behaviour. Consequently, there have been no incidents of physical restraint and the use of sanctions is low. The children and young people have swiftly accepted the clear rules and boundaries of the home. This is due to the skills, care and understanding of the staff. The has ensured that the children and young people feel safe and are secure in their placement. Consequently, the children and young people quickly settle and positively respond to the family-based ethos and values that include respecting each other and those who care for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a wealth of experience and is suitably qualified. She is an exemplary role model who is highly regarded by children and young people, staff and professionals. She generates trust in others due to the high level of commitment demonstrated by her management style. Her approach has established a nurturing home environment where children and young people can thrive.

Since taking up the post, the manager has methodically strengthened the existing monitoring systems. The monthly regulation 44 monitoring visits are robust and pick up on any omissions and these are immediately addressed. The staff and professional visitors have regular consultation with the children and young people about their care. The seeking of feedback from children and young people means that the staff team can respond to maximise the children and young people's progress and positive experiences.

The statement of purpose and the children and young people's guide are up to date and

reflect appropriately the care and support provided, and the ethos of the home. All the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed.

The manager's approach increases the motivation and job satisfaction of the staff, as they know that their contribution is recognised and valued. All staff spoke with pride about the care they provide and the manager's high standards. A member of staff said, 'The manager leads by example. She gives us clear direction. We are all committed to the children.'

The staff have excellent relationships with children and young people's families. The families trust staff and are confident about the care the children and young people receive because they know that the staff act in the best interest of their children.

Excellent communication means that stakeholders always have an up-to-date understanding of how children and young people are doing. As a result, any issues are addressed before they become major concerns. A professional said, 'I receive regular emails, phone calls and a weekly update about the children. I am always made welcome when visiting the home.'

The staff undertake regular in-house and e-learning training to refresh their core skills and abilities. Regular supervision, appraisals and staff meetings help staff to increase their knowledge and skill base. The staff meetings focus on all the children and young people's needs and provide the staff with regular opportunities to discuss how best to support those needs.

Ofsted is informed appropriately of any matters that the manager considers serious. This is indicative of the open and transparent approach she employs, and means that the regulator has an overview of the actions taken to safeguard the children and young people.

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: 1257706

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gravitas Care Limited

Responsible individual: Peter Whitworth

Registered manager: Lisa Allison

Inspectors

Debbie Foster: social care inspector

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