

1259184

Registered provider: Ashwood Children's Care Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

Four children were living at the home at the time of this inspection and all children were spoken to as part of the inspection.

The home is led by a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 October 2024

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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2024	Full	Good
16/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
01/09/2021	Full	Outstanding
30/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a warm and loving home, with a strong family feel. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed. Staff make every effort to ensure that each child feels comfortable, showing great warmth and affection towards the children. Staff have supported children to personalise their bedrooms to their individual tastes and interests and this increases the children's sense of belonging.

Children are proud of their home. Staff actively encourage children's friends to visit, strengthening friendships with school friends. There is also a conscious effort made by the team to ensure the same staff support children on activities with peers, further replicating family life.

The staff understand that past life experiences can continue to impact on children. Children, at times, present staff with behaviours that challenge. In response, staff adopt a caring and nurturing approach, and they give praise freely and often. The manager and staff do not implement consequences to manage poor behaviour. The therapeutic approach of the staff team is evident in all areas of care practice. Staff focus on giving support to restore peer relationships when difficulties arise. This enables the children to develop respectful and meaningful bonds.

Staff want the best for children. They persevere through challenging times. Staff are dedicated and motivated. They always recognise the progress that children make, no matter how small this might be. For example, children are now able to go to the barber's to have their hair cut and have learned how to shower independently.

Staff help children to have high self-esteem and celebrate one another's diversity. They are good at sensitively supporting children who are exploring their own sense of identity. Staff make sure that children do not feel judged or stigmatised.

The staff support children to participate in a wide range of activities, using resources from the wider community very well. Additionally, staff support children to understand the importance of helping others through charity work and fundraising events. This enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and develop crucial social skills they will need later in their lives.

All children are making good progress in education. The staff understand the importance of education for children and take education very seriously, advocating on behalf of children to secure the right educational provision. For example, one child has been educated in the home with a tutor. The manager challenged the special educational needs and disabilities team when an education provision could not be identified for the child, recognising the importance of the child's plans to be reviewed to evidence progress made by the child. As a result, the child has now been able to start looking around new schools.

Staff ensure that children's wishes and feelings are sought. One child expressed his disappointment to staff when the age rating for an online game he played was changed by the designers, meaning he was no longer allowed to play that specific game. The child was supported to write to the company, explaining why he did not believe that the age should be changed. To everyone's surprise, the company agreed with the child's reasoning, changing the age back to the original rating. This supports children to understand if they speak up, they can influence change.

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

During this inspection period, there have been historic disclosures of children being harmed while living at the home. The manager and leaders of the organisation acted on these effectively and immediately. The manager has worked closely with the team around the child to ensure safety measures in place for children are further strengthened and discussions with the team to ensure lessons are learned. The children have been provided with appropriate support and resources during this time.

Children have comprehensive risk assessments, which identify their risks and vulnerabilities. These clear plans provide staff with strategies to support children in managing risks. Staff review these plans after every incident. The quality of risk management plans means that risks are managed effectively.

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made by children. This lower level of complaint demonstrates that children can talk to staff and raise any concerns informally. The manager has implemented picture format complaint forms to ensure that all children are able to express any worries or concerns that they may have, making this accessible to all children.

There is a clear and proactive multi-agency approach to keeping children safe. The registered manager and staff provide children with consistent, reliable daily routines. Staff provide emotional warmth and understanding. This supports children to feel protected and secure.

The manager responds to any allegations against staff, in accordance with guidance. Records of investigations show a thorough approach to managing concerns. When allegations have been made, managers work with safeguarding partners to ensure that all allegations are shared, and investigations take place. Staff are also supported throughout this process. This process assures that children are protected.

The manager has supported the team to improve the quality of physical restraint records. This provides the reader with an accurate account of the event and techniques used to manage behaviours that challenge before escalating to physical restraint. The children and staff can talk about these incidents and so raise any issues they may have. The manager reviews and evaluates all the records of restraint to ensure these were necessary and proportionate. Additionally, records are also evaluated by the organisation's restraints trainer to provide an additional layer of oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is inspirational. With the support of the deputy manager, she leads a motivated, experienced and confident staff team. They know the children extremely well and with patience, nurture and resilience they ensure that all children receive good care and support.

The manager is proactive and has developed a culture in the home that sets high expectations. She ensures there is a child-centred approach to care and recognises that children's progress is unique to each child. She is always seeking ways to improve her practice and is a leader in the organisation for her knowledge of research-informed practice.

Staff hold managers in high regard and commented that the managers are the best they have worked with. The managers are inspirational, and the staff speak positively about leaders offering support with both work and more personal matters. There have been very few departures from the staff team. This has contributed to high morale and dedication throughout the service and continuity of care for children.

The manager is a confident leader. She is a strong and powerful advocate for the children in her care and makes every decision with the child at the centre. For example, the manager has complained to the local authority about proposed changes to a child's care plan that are against the child's wishes and have not been discussed with the team around the child.

A wide range of quality assurance mechanisms provide the manager with all-round service oversight. The manager's prompt response to any areas requiring improvement ensures that high standards of care are maintained.

The manager leads by example. She recognises the importance of always being available to talk to children and staff. The supportive culture that the managers have created ensures that children and staff have the help and guidance they need. Children can approach the manager with any issues or concerns they may have, in the knowledge they will be taken seriously.

The manager is influential and highly respected by staff and external professionals. Feedback from partner agencies was unanimously positive, with external agencies holding the manager and staff in high regard. There are also good working relationships with family members. One child's relative said: 'The manager is the best person [child's name] has in his life. The support and opportunities they have given him is something no one else has ever done.'

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: 1259184

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ashwood Children's Care Home Limited

Registered provider address: G43a Repton House, Bretby Business Park, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 0YZ

Responsible individual: Nathan Sweet

Registered manager: Amy Self

Inspectors

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

Kaleigh Spinks, Social Care Inspector

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