

1263120

Registered provider: Apex Childrens Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It provides care and support for up to four children who may have social and emotional needs and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 1 November 2018.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2021

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
17/11/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/07/2021	Full	Inadequate
01/05/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, there were four children living in the home. One child has moved on from the home since the last inspection and a new child has moved in. Both moves were planned and well supported. Staff encouraged the new child to visit the home prior to moving in. Children who have moved on from the home remain in regular contact.

The home is a warm, nurturing environment. The children's bedrooms have been decorated to their chosen theme. The home has lots of soft furnishings and is a comfortable, clean and tidy environment. Children feel safe and settled and one child said, 'This is the best place I've ever lived.'

Children have positive relationships with staff. The inspector observed caring and warm interactions between all the children and staff members. Children's individual identities are valued. The staff take the time to listen to children's views and feelings about their care.

Staff encourage all children to develop independence skills. During the inspection, children were observed cooking a meal for everyone in the home. Children are supported to develop skills such as washing, budgeting and keeping the home environment clean and tidy. This has increased the children's confidence.

Two children in the home are currently not in education, employment or training. Staff are clear about the importance of education and the children have learning activities to complete throughout the day. The manager of the home advocates for the children; however, currently the children remain out of education. The children who are in education are making excellent progress and both have high aspirations for the future.

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

There are clear and individualised risk assessments in place for the children and these cover relevant concerns. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and are updated following incidents. Staff are knowledgeable about children's risks and the strategies they need to implement to keep children safe. Children living in the home are being kept safe.

There has been a significant reduction in incidents of children going missing from the home. Children now each have an up-to-date missing-from-home plan and staff know the strategies within the plans. When children are away from the home, staff remain in regular contact.

Incidents at the home are infrequent. Incidents that have taken place have been clearly recorded and well managed in line with risk assessments. The manager

evaluates the information in incident reports and ensures that follow-up work is completed with children. As a result, the manager and staff learn from incidents and strengthen the support for children.

Children are able to identify members of staff who they feel comfortable and confident to speak with about concerns. Children know the correct procedures for making a complaint if they have any issues with how they are being cared for.

Positive behaviour is encouraged. Children receive positive reinforcement for positive behaviour. This has resulted in there being very few incidents and allows for children to be rewarded and feel respected and valued.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a qualified and experienced registered manager. A new responsible individual is monitoring the improvements in practice in the home. They both have high aspirations for the children and the staff team. The manager knows all the children well and advocates on their behalf. The manager leads by example; one member of staff said, 'The managers would not expect you to do anything they would not do themselves. They go above and beyond for the children here.'

The manager has established positive relationships with external professionals. External professionals provided positive feedback about the level of communication they have with the manager and the quality of care the children receive. The manager advocates for children to ensure that the support that children receive from external professionals is consistent.

Monitoring systems in the home are improved. The manager has clear monitoring tools which are used consistently, and all incidents are now evaluated. Management oversight of the home has improved significantly.

The home is staffed to meet the needs of the children. However, the gender balance of the staff team requires further consideration to enable children to maintain relationships with people irrespective of gender. The manager is aware of this.

Regular supervision is taking place for all staff. Supervision is utilised as a time for reflection and to review any training that staff have attended. However, the records of supervision are not physically signed by both parties.

The manager has completed a locality risk assessment for the home. However, this does not contain consultation with relevant people. The document lacks rigour and would be strengthened by the inclusion of this feedback.

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 registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))	20 July 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children of compulsory school age are in education. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant knowledge to be able to respond to the health needs of children, specifically formal training around attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 34, paragraph 7.12)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a gender balance within the staff team to enable children to maintain relationships with people irrespective of gender. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for covering outcomes of supervision and to ensure that both the person delivering the supervision and the staff member have a signed copy of the record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

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: 1263120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Apex Childrens Services Limited

Registered provider address: Apex Childrens Services, 6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire CH41 1BP

Responsible individual: Garry Jones

Registered manager: Jennifer Savage

Inspector

Rose Maddocks, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022