

1263773

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may experience emotional and/or social difficulties. However, at the time of the inspection, staff were caring for two children.

An experienced manager and responsible individual have been in post for several years.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 October 2022

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 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/05/2021	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and staff regularly spend time together playing board games or doing activities. The children attend several after-school clubs and staff cheer the children on at their football matches and fencing competitions. When children achieve awards, clear records are kept for the future. For example, one child has their swimming badge saved. One child said that the food served in the home was 'two trillion out of 10'. Children experience good, quality care from staff who know them well.

Children attend school and are making progress academically. The manager has ensured that both children get additional support to promote their education. For example, one child receives extra tuition in English and Maths. On occasion, the children struggle to understand how their behaviour may impact on their classmates. Staff support children to reflect on their behaviour, and to empathise with how others may be feeling after an incident has arisen. Children have built more secure friendships since being cared for in the home.

Children are given the tools to express and share their emotions with staff. For example, one child uses emotion cards to explain how they are feeling. This approach is working because the child can now explain what they are feeling and why. Children are given regular praise and one child has positive affirmations displayed on their bedroom wall. The manager has been a strong advocate in finding therapeutic support for both children. All health appointments for children are up to date, and children have a good understanding of why attending health appointments is important.

Overall, staff work hard to develop good relationships with children's families. However, not all staff are clear about one child's family history. This is necessary to ensure that staff understand how the child has experienced their life while being cared for by their family and throughout different care placements. Where one child has asked to see their siblings, staff have listened to the child. However, there has not been enough advocacy or escalation to make this happen.

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

Staff regularly talk to children about topics such as online safety and criminal exploitation. Children engage well in these conversations and, as a result, are better able to recognise and respond to risks. Children consent to room searches and they understand why staff need to supervise them when they are using the internet. Children recognise that staff do these things to keep them safe.

One child expressed that they are 'proud of their good behaviour' and that they had 'got better at listening'. This child's view correlated with them having no physical interventions for the last two months. This is clear evidence of progress. The

manager has good oversight of physical interventions, and she ensures that practice is safe.

Although, it is rare for children to leave the home without permission, when this has happened it has been managed well. The manager ensures that information is shared appropriately with wider professionals, and return interviews are consistently requested from the local authority.

Children know how to complain, and this process is regularly revisited with children. When a complaint is made, the manager will write to the child and explain what action will be taken to address their concerns. Where concerns have been raised about staff practice, the manager has taken immediate action to ensure that children's safety is maintained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a pattern of consistent, quality leadership within this home for several years. The registered manager is committed to her role and is supported by two deputy managers, who both have good relationships with the children.

The manager has high expectations of the staff team, and she works hard to improve outcomes for children. Staff receive regular supervision from their manager, and team meetings happen monthly. Staff gave good examples of the manager being readily available to help them when they required support. For example, on one occasion, a staff member asked for help during a behavioural incident with a child. There was an immediate coordinated response, and this staff member was quickly supported to keep the child safe.

When a child joins the home, this is done in a planned way with consideration to the needs of any residing children. Although it is rare for children to experience unplanned endings, when this does happen, the manager ensures that children leave with positive memories. For example, one child had a leaving party and received gifts after living in the home for two years. Staff used the opportunity to tell the child how much they would be missed.

The manager works hard to ensure that all records are written in a way that is accessible for children. Children read their plans. They reflect on what is going well for them and what is going less well. Children's life-story books are up to date and lots of photographs are included.

Although the manager is working hard to improve diversity within the staff team, this remains an area for development. Children would benefit from there being more male role models. In addition, care practice is not yet creative enough to recognise and respond to one child's identity needs. For example, it is not recorded that one child speaks a second language and can read and write in a third. The child is not being provided with enough opportunities to build on these language skills.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that care is provided that meets each child's needs and promotes their welfare, taking into account of the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14 paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person should ensure that advocacy is the process of representing the views, wishes and feelings of the child in matters that affect the child, or of enabling the child to express their views, wishes and feelings themselves. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21 paragraph 4.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53 paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that, whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. Where the home's statement of purpose makes it explicit that the home uses staff of one sex only, clear guidance will need to be in place and followed as to how children are enabled to maintain relationships with people of a different gender. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54 paragraph 10.22)

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: 1263773

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 2, First Floor, Millennium Court, First Avenue, Centrum 100, Burton-Upon-Trent DE14 2WH

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Alicia Coring

Inspectors

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector
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