

1272461

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a limited company. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in February 2018. The manager is suitably qualified.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 August 2023

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	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 15 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2023	Full	Good
02/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2020	Full	Good
06/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive high-quality and individualised care that is having a positive impact on their lives. All the children currently living in the home have made good progress from their starting points. Children find stability and security living at this home; three of the four children have lived at the home for one, two and three years.

Children benefit from strong working relationships between staff at the home, external professionals and children's families, which promotes joined-up thinking and planning. When there have been changes or differences about plans for children, regular meetings have supported partnership working to find the best way forward to safeguard and meet children's needs. If staff feel that children are not getting the help and support they need, they advocate strongly to ensure that children's needs are met.

Children are encouraged and supported to have their health needs met. The nurse for looked after children is a familiar person in the home and calls in regularly to offer advice on a range of health needs, which helps to build relationships.

All children are enrolled in education, and despite some mixed progress, there is a high expectation that children will learn and can do anything they set their minds to. Achievements are praised and rewarded, certificates are issued and education is promoted. Children who had not been attending education before living at the home have been supported to return to school. One school professional said, 'They [staff] have been very committed to promoting the value of education whilst being understanding and empathetic around the barriers to engagement.'

Children's emotional needs are well understood. Experienced leaders guide the team and provide appropriate training to ensure a trauma-informed and relational approach to support children's positive progress. Children experience clear boundaries and expectations for their behaviour, which supports them to regulate their emotions and manage their feelings.

Children have positive opportunities to experience new activities. They have participated in creating an activity programme for the school holidays, which includes a summer holiday. Memory and message books are created throughout children's time in the home as reminders of activities, and this is a lovely record for children of their time in the home.

Children live in a spacious, well-maintained and resourced home. It is beautifully decorated, and children respect this. There are photos of the children on the walls, and they have ensuite bedrooms that they have personalised. Observations show that relationships in the home are highly positive, supportive and loving.

Children are supported throughout their time in the home to prepare for independence; they are encouraged to learn how to cook and tidy up and are given incentives to learn self-care skills. Children are advised about their entitlements and pathway planning when they get closer to living independently. Key-work sessions address relevant issues for children and sensitive topics to help support and keep children safe.

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

Risks are well assessed and identified. Children's vulnerabilities are well understood by committed and caring staff. Children co-construct behaviour management plans, which include an up-to-date photo and a short introduction of the child and their key needs. Wider information helps to inform staff about how best to support children and understand their behaviours and gives strategies to support their care. Staff are guided by these plans, which are regularly updated and give clear indications of the progress children are making.

A risk assessment tool begins before children come to live at the home. The risk assessment considers any risks to existing children living at the home and what additional support is required to ensure that children experience well-planned transitions into the home. Most children visit the home before moving in and are supported to personalise their bedrooms once they have moved in. Children generally move on from the home in a planned way, and even when situations surrounding unplanned moves have occurred, these have been completed with sensitivity and planning to ensure the least disruption for children.

There are clear protocols in place to protect and report children who go missing from care. The protocols and grab packs are detailed and contain helpful information to guide staff and ensure that up-to-date information is shared with the police. Missing-from-care episodes have decreased. Staff know the children well and work hard to prevent them from going missing. When children do leave the home, staff follow them and maintain phone and text communication with them, trying to persuade them to return home. However, missing-from-care protocols are not always followed closely by staff. However, this shortfall has had no impact on children.

When children return home, return home interviews are requested. A local authority missing persons coordinator reported very positively about the staff's assistance and cooperation with organising return home interviews.

Behaviour management and positive relationships are a strength of this home. Children engage well through key-work sessions and in regular house meetings to improve relationships when issues have arisen. Bullying issues between children are addressed promptly. Individual work with children and joint work with the community police officer have supported staff interventions to understand and resolve issues and keep children safe.

Effective arrangements for safeguarding children are in place, and children's progress indicates that they are being kept safer because of the ongoing work of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Highly effective leaders are ambitious for children and are experienced in their approach. They have high expectations of their staff team to meet the needs of children. These expectations are clearly conveyed to staff and are seen throughout the values and work of the staff team.

Leaders know the children well and have a clear understanding of their past experiences and the impact these have on their current behaviours and ability to make progress. Leaders are effective in challenging placing authorities to support and understand care planning and to ensure this is in children's best interests.

Leaders have created a home environment that has allowed good care to flourish. This has been incredibly supportive for children and helped staff who are undertaking care. Staff have a positive induction and are supported through a probation period. Regular supervision identifies good practice and ensures plans for children's progress. Appraisals ensure both good and poor practice are identified, and support, training or progression are encouraged.

Leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement. They strive continuously to improve systems and arrangements to best meet the needs of children. For example, there is an ongoing consultation with children to produce a more child-friendly children's guide.

Feedback from individuals external to the home has indicated a highly positive approach to working together to ensure that children's safety and needs are met well. One social worker said, 'The manager sets the culture in the home. Communication is brilliant, and they have provided excellent care.'

The staff team is diverse, and it addresses children's identity needs well, for example through diet, religious practices and discussions about cultural events. Leaders address issues of tolerance well and try to find ways to improve situations that arise. For example, children are encouraged to have their say through regular children's meetings, which are well attended, creative and fun, and show good participation in a wide range of topics.

Leaders have navigated recent staff shortages well by ensuring that consistent bank staff have been used while ongoing recruitment has taken place. Social workers spoke about sensitive and careful planning when staff leave or new staff join the team. This has supported children to understand and embrace changes.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. In particular, staff should follow the home's set protocols for individual children and keep to this guidance when reporting them as missing to the police and local authority. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

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: 1272461

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Area Camden Limited

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior,
Bromsgrove B60 4AD

Responsible individual: Joanne Capuano

Registered manager: Tasmin Lewis

Inspector

Christine Kennet, Social Care Inspector

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