

2495504

Registered provider: Clouds Children's Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for one child who may be experiencing emotional, social and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager is very experienced.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023

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: 11 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/08/2021	Full	Good
15/01/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is warm and welcoming, with a family feel. This gives children a sense of belonging. The staff are friendly, and nothing is too much trouble. However, the home requires some redecoration, to improve the appearance of the environment.

Children are part of the community. They are encouraged to actively support local charities. This promotes a feeling of participation and gives children a sense of achievement.

Staff support children to maintain positive relationships with those who are important to them. Staff make sure that children communicate with their social workers and parents about the times when they can see their families, and staff organise transport for the visits. This helps children to maintain important relationships with their loved ones.

Staff support children to express their views, wishes and feelings. Children are part of the care planning process and contribute to a written plan ('my plan'). Staff provide lots of opportunities for children to speak out about their care, feel listened to and understand that their opinions are valued.

Staff motivate children to learn and encourage them to attend education. When the children need to be educated at home, staff support and motivate them to learn, and work effectively with identified tutors. This helps children to engage with learning and enhances their overall development and progress.

When children move into the home, this is managed well, and in a caring manner. Transitions to and from the home are planned to support the needs of the child. However, children have occasionally moved away from the home suddenly, and consequently, they have been unprepared. This does not support children's emotional well-being as children have to cope with a sudden change and lose the support of familiar adults.

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

The manager and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the vulnerabilities and potential risks posed to the children. Staff are knowledgeable and use safeguarding protocols and procedures when required.

Managers take a robust approach to managing allegations. They are reported promptly and appropriately to the relevant authorities. Any allegations are investigated in line with procedures, with satisfactory conclusions.

Staff's approach to behaviour management is good. Physical interventions have been used minimally and children rarely receive consequences. Staff have reflective

discussions with children to help them understand and to manage their emotions and feelings. This then helps the staff to understand the reasons behind children's behaviours. This approach has been successful in strengthening relationships in the home.

Children's key-working sessions are creative and extremely child-focused. Staff use interactive themes to help children engage. This ensures that the sessions are enjoyable, and that delicate work is completed in a child-focused way. Through this work, children are able to understand risks and work towards their goals.

Children very rarely go missing. The manager and staff know the missing-from-home protocols and procedures. Recording of such incidents is detailed and clear. However, on one occasion, staff did not implement missing-from-care protocols. A return home interview was not undertaken. This potentially increases the risk to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is experienced and highly skilled. She is committed to providing the very highest standards of care for children. The manager's leadership style motivates staff to be good childcare practitioners. Staff enjoy working at this home. One staff member said: 'I have never worked at a place that provides so much support and such a thorough induction.'

There has been some turnover of staff. However, there is a committed core staff team whose members have established relationships with children, ensuring that the impact on children is minimised. Supervision sessions are regular and staff receive additional supervision when needed. The introduction of a buddy system for new staff has underpinned the existing support offered to staff. Overall, the staff team remains strong, and the manager is working hard to retain and develop staff.

Managers are visible, dedicated and approachable. One staff member said: 'The home is like a family as we spend so much time together with the children.' Managers have high expectations and are ambitious for the children. The managers are actively involved in the children's lives, and they have excellent relationships with every child. This promotes a sense stability for the children.

Staff receive a variety of training. The training raises staff knowledge and understanding of the issues relevant to the children. Team meetings now have a learning element attached to them. This provides staff with an awareness and insight into the varying needs of the children. The learning from this is applied to day-to-day practice.

Quality assurance and monitoring systems are very good. The internal systems regularly monitor the quality of care provided to the children. This includes the oversight of records and evidencing children's views, wishes and feelings. Any shortfalls are immediately actioned.

Thorough recruitment processes are in place to ensure that children are cared for by safe adults. However, on one occasion, pre-employment checks regarding references had not been verbally verified before employment commenced. Potentially, there is an increased risk that unsuitable staff may be employed at the home to care for children.

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

Recommendations

- 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- As part of their responsibility for maintaining good employment practice, the registered person should ensure that recruitment checks safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. This is in relation to a references not being verbally verified before an employee starts work. ('Guide to Children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that children are provided with an environment that is homely and free from hazards. ('Guide to Children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

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: 2495504

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Clouds Children's Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 73 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8SP

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: Nicol Orme

Inspector

Linda Mason, Social Care Inspector

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