

2526435

Registered provider: Shalamar Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately-owned home provides care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties from the age of four to 17.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 December 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: 2 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2022	Full	Good
23/09/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, one child was living at the home. Since the last inspection, one child has moved to a different home with the same provider. Four children moved on to either supported accommodation or alternative provision.

Children make good progress at this home. Staff know children very well and advocate for them strongly while enabling them to be at the forefront of decision-making. Children are given the opportunity to attend their own part of the handover between staff, enabling children's voices to be heard and respected.

Staff recognise the importance of family time and respond in a highly creative and thoughtful way. For one child, this meant spending quality time over the Christmas period with family members creating memories which will last a lifetime.

Staff support children to receive education through local mainstream schools, colleges and alternative provision. The management team communicates consistently with other professionals regarding plans for education, especially when a move to the home results in a change of education provision for a child. For those children experiencing delays in accessing education, staff organise a creative and realistic home-learning schedule.

A daily community meeting enables children and staff to share their views with each other and debate current topics in an educational but informal way. On occasion, these meetings have taken place outside the home such as at the beach in the summer and at the park.

The home benefits from the input of two therapeutic practitioners, one of whom undertakes art therapy with children. Staff use a therapeutic approach. This diverse range of therapeutic input enables children's trauma needs to be met in an individualised way. A professional said, 'I think that the home has got it right. I am impressed.'

Staff act on children's interests and, when appropriate, link these interests to rewards. Activities, celebrations and holidays are carefully planned and captured in beautifully crafted memory books for the children.

Children benefit from a spacious and well-maintained home which is personalised with paintings by staff, collages of photos of children and decorated for celebrations such as birthdays, Halloween and Christmas. The garden is peaceful and well designed and enables children to spend time outside in the summer months.

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

Missing-from-care episodes are extremely well managed. Staff respond immediately to the specific risks working collaboratively with the police and other professionals to ensure children's safety. One episode resulted in the police taking immediate action to safeguard children during a planned activity outside the home. Staff remained calm, professional and alert to the evolving situation to ensure that children returned safely to the home.

A small number of physical interventions involving light touch and guidance have taken place and are recorded well by staff. Management oversight is evident as well as debriefs with staff and use of clear de-escalation techniques.

Consequences focusing on a restorative approach are well considered by the manager. This helps children to learn from mistakes and make better choices. Room searches were undertaken with a clear rationale and items that may increase risks to children removed.

Managers and staff have a comprehensive understanding of each child's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. The regular review and revision of children's plans ensures that they are up to date and remain relevant. Individual work is planned and staff have sessions with each child.

The risks surrounding social media and mobile phone use are appropriately assessed. Robust parental controls, phone checks undertaken when necessary and staff's diligence around child sexual exploitation ensure that children are protected.

Allegations and complaints were well documented. Exceptionally-well detailed investigations are undertaken by the leadership team. On one occasion, a safeguarding concern was not reported to Ofsted due to professional advice received. However, all other agencies were informed and the necessary actions were taken to ensure that the child was safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has met the one requirement and three recommendations from the last inspection.

The dedicated manager is highly experienced in working with children. She has a forward-thinking and innovative approach, demonstrating a genuine commitment to meeting children's needs. Leaders are readily available to assist and advise. They regularly attend team meetings and other meetings with placing authorities to ensure that children receive the highest levels of care.

The quality of documentation is exceptional. A significant amount of detail ensures that no questions are unanswered and guides the reader to understand quickly the rationale for decisions taken.

Staff are highly experienced in working with children. Staff's invaluable experiences enable a deeper understanding of the needs of traumatised children.

Staff demonstrate a deep resilience regardless of how challenging the situation or circumstances are. One staff member said, 'Sometimes, the stuffing is knocked out of us but as a team we come together, reflect and start again.' The staff team are described as 'close knit' and work exceptionally well together. A culture of high aspiration and positivity led by the manager enables staff to manage these difficult times. Staff say that they feel valued and express high levels of job satisfaction. They spoke with genuine pride about how they are making a difference to the lives of children.

The manager has an in-depth understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement at the home. A range of monitoring tools assists them to review the quality of care. The manager works through any areas of weakness and she challenges any practice that is not in children's best interests. The manager is eager to identify good practice and shares and celebrates this with the whole staff team.

Excellent access to high-quality and purposeful training enables staff to develop an array of skills that helps them to confidently support children's complex needs. A variety of bespoke topics are offered such as psychological first aid, neuroscience of attachment, the functions of emotions, mirroring and emerging personality disorder.

Some language written and used to describe children at the home is not child friendly. As a result, there are missed opportunities to ensure that language used is positive and caring.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records relating to children are written in child-friendly language and that language used to describe children is appropriate. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should notify Ofsted if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 occurs, in particular when there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

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: 2526435

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Shalamar Children Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 63a, Thames Industrial Estate, Princess Margaret Road, East Tilbury, Essex RM18 8RH

Responsible individual: Samuel Connor

Registered manager: Louise Pascoe

Inspector:

Emily Stevens, Social Care Inspector

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