

2544851

Registered provider: Alexanders House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns and manages this home. It provides care for up to three children who are aged between eight and 18 years of age.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2022.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living at the home and have built trusting relationships with the staff. Communication between the children and staff is open and honest. Children feel listened to and know how to make a complaint if needed. Children's confidence is improved through having positive relationships with adults, which enable them to ask for help and support from the staff.

Children make good progress from their starting points and benefit from individual activities of their choice. Children are supported to engage in community activities that improve their social skills and understanding of respectful relationships. Children have a sense of pride about their local community and gain an understanding about social issues, for example homelessness.

Children are supported to maintain and improve family relationships where appropriate. Children's families, friends and loved ones are invited to the home and supported to spend time together. On some occasions, staff support children to visit family members who do not live locally. This commitment can involve travelling some distance to maintain these important relationships. A member of staff spoke about the positive effect this has on a child re-establishing a relationship with a family member. This helps children to understand their identity and improve future relationships.

Children make good progress at school and further education. Where children struggle to attend mainstream education, staff advocate on behalf of children to seek alternative provisions. Staff make efforts to engage children in informal education activities in the home environment in order to motivate and encourage attendance.

Where children are struggling with their own mental health, the staff offer nurture and support. Staff seek and follow advice from professionals within children's mental health services. This unified approach means children receive a consistent approach to support their mental well-being.

The home is furnished to a good standard. Photographs of children and their artwork are proudly displayed throughout the home and make the environment child-friendly and inviting. The range of games, books and crafts are chosen by children, which helps them learn and play together. Children's bedrooms are personalised and decorated, and this gives the children a sense of belonging in the home.

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

Children say they feel safe living at the home. Risks to children and their vulnerabilities are well understood by staff. Risk assessments are thorough and

updated regularly, particularly after incidents have occurred. Staff respond to incidents promptly and make referrals to external agencies, such as youth drug and alcohol services. This means children have access to professional help to overcome any difficulties they may encounter.

Staff understand children's presenting needs in the context of past trauma children have experienced. Staff adopt a nurturing and sensitive approach to caring for children. Children are supported to learn about consequences through restorative approaches. This helps children feel valued and safe to explore their feelings. Professionals echo this view and praise staff for their approach.

Staff use creative methods to engage children in learning and understanding risks, such as internet safety, by using props such as puppets. This child-led approach means children learn about serious topics in a way that is not intimidating and that they can understand.

Incidents of physical intervention or children missing from home are rare. When incidents do occur, staff take appropriate action. The registered manager has oversight through debriefs with both staff and children. The manager also uses audit tools, which are used to inform risk assessments, to identify support or services that children may benefit from.

Children are supported to gain independent living skills that they can use in the future. However, restrictive measures are placed on kitchen cupboards containing certain foods, such as snacks. These measures limit opportunities to educate children to make decisions about healthier food choices.

Staff understand children's needs and their plans. However, the most up-to-date care plans are not always requested from the local authority, such as Education Health and Care plans. This means that children are not always receiving the statutory duty of care and support to which they are entitled. This may lead to them not fulfilling their full potential in education.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is conscientious and strives to make improvements in the home and improve staff knowledge. The manager uses networks of professionals as learning opportunities for the staff and imbeds this in practice in the home. This provides greater opportunity for staff to respond to children's needs and raises the standard of the care children receive.

Staff feel supported and listened to. If it is identified that staff relationships are not positive, the registered manager intervenes promptly. The registered manager ensures this does not impact on the morale of the home. One member of staff said this helped them to feel confident to be able to share their concerns and be taken seriously.

The registered manager and the leadership team have effective communication with professionals and other significant people in children's networks. This is consistently echoed by professionals and creates collaborative working relationships which benefit the children.

The manager and the leadership team operate on a foundation of understanding children's past experiences, including trauma and loss. One member of staff consulted with professionals about how best to share with children that they were leaving the employment of the home. The reason for this was to minimise any negative effects on the children. This helps children see that they are valued and cared for and demonstrates the ethos of the home.

Staff receive practice-related supervision on a regular basis. Detailed notes of conversations are recorded about children's needs, personal development, training and well-being. The registered manager uses a strength-based approach and actions are set and reviewed. This helps the registered manager maintain oversight of staff and monitor the quality of care that children are provided.

Children's records reflect day-to-day experiences and are written directly to the child so that they are more relatable and easier to understand. Incidents of concern are recorded in language that does not place blame on the children. The registered manager reviews and records debriefs when incidents occur in order to use as learning opportunities and to safeguard children from future harm.

The registered manager is considerate of the views and recommendations from the independent visitor in their report. However, the manager does not routinely check that the report has explicit views about whether the children are safeguarded or their welfare promoted in the home.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have access to food of their choice and that work is carried out with children to help them make healthy choices. This requirement has not been met following the previous inspection, so has been restated.	18 May 2023
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out the independent person's opinion as to whether—	18 May 2023

children are effectively safeguarded and;

the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.
(Regulation 44 (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that copies of children's relevant plans are available and up to date. This includes escalating to the relevant professional if not received, particularly in relation to Education Health and Care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 10, paragraph 2.1)

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: 2544851

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Alexanders House Limited

Responsible individual: David Palmer

Registered manager: Marie Carver

Inspector

Cat Clasper, Social Care Inspector

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