

2547611

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It provides care for up to five children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences. At the time of this inspection, five children were living in the home, and all spoke with the inspector.

A suitably qualified and experienced manager is in post.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 2025

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: 14 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2023	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This is a home filled with the sounds of laughter and children playing. Managers and staff understand the importance of positive, trusting relationships for children, and work hard to provide them. As a result, children feel loved, and talk about the staff and their peers feeling like family. One child said: 'Every single person, children and staff, are just your family. The biggest part of family is love. Staff tell you they love you. It is such a warm feeling.' Another said: 'These are my family; they have made me feel that this is a home, not a place I have to live, but a place I want to live.'

All children in the home are making exceptional progress from their individual starting points. The strong, positive relationships provide children with a secure base from which to make progress. Staff provide children with care that is emotionally attuned, creative, consistent and informed by research. As a result, children are becoming safer, better able to understand and manage their emotions, engage in education, and develop the skills they will need for later in life. Children recognise the progress they are making. One child said: 'You should have met me before I came here. I am a whole different person. I have a life now, a purpose, and things are happening for me.'

Children are involved in care planning and in making decisions about their lives. This means they feel listened to and valued, and trust staff to advocate for them. One child said: 'Before I felt I needed to attend all my meetings to make sure my voice is heard. I don't feel that now, which is a huge relief as I know [name of manager] and [name of deputy manager] will share my thoughts and feelings.'

Children are doing exceptionally well with their education. Managers work in close partnership with children and their schools to identify and overcome any barriers to learning. Because of this, children who were previously not in education now attend full time. This support is enhancing children's life chances. One social worker said that the child they work with 'has been able to manage and maintain school, and is now likely to get qualifications. Previously, that wasn't on the cards.'

Children take part in a range of activities that they enjoy and are enriching. Staff work with children to identify their interests and provide them with opportunities to enjoy them. These hobbies and interests build positive memories for children, teach them new skills, and build their self-esteem and confidence. For the older children in the home, there are examples of these interests providing life-enhancing opportunities for them. One child is being supported to look at scholarships to play their sport of choice internationally, another is being supported to qualify as a lifeguard, while another is being given an opportunity to work as a champion for children within the organisation.

Children in the home are healthy and thriving. Staff work hard to support children's physical and emotional health to a very high standard. Children are embracing a healthy

lifestyle; they do sports, go to the gym, learn to make healthy meals, and learn about their emotions and themselves.

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

Children have a strong sense of security and of being safe. One child said: 'I feel like nothing can happen to me because staff won't let it happen.' Another said, 'Staff will protect me. 100%.'

The safety and welfare of children is central to everything that managers and staff do. Staff are proactive in safeguarding children. They work with children to identify risks early and mitigate them. Excellent and creative partnership working means that children get the right support quickly. This robust approach to safeguarding has resulted in children becoming significantly safer since living in the home.

Children love living in the home, and as a result they rarely go missing. Due to the relationship-based approach staff use, there has been a significant reduction in incidents of children going missing from the home. No children have gone missing in the last 15 months. Prior to that, staff's response to children going missing from the home was consistently strong.

Staff are very skilled at using de-escalation techniques, and in supporting children to better understand and express their emotions positively. Creative strategies, such as emotions cards and sensory areas in their rooms, are used with children to great effect. This has led to a significant decrease in incidents of children having to be held to keep them and others safe. One child said: 'Before [the manager] came back I was running away, always in holds. But since she came back that hasn't happened. She protects me over everything.'

Staff's response to harmful sexual behaviour is exemplary. Managers and staff work in close partnership with the home's clinical team and external experts to address harmful sexual behaviour. Staff's approach has been consistent and therapeutic, focusing on meeting children's needs, and increasing knowledge and understanding. This collaborative effort has led to a significant reduction in harmful sexual behaviour over time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Children are extremely positive about the dedicated and inspirational managers in the home. One child said that the managers are 'the best I've ever had, easily. You can tell they do it because they love it, and they want to help you. They are just so positive.'

Managers have high aspirations for the children in their care and advocate for them in the way a good parent would. They use a range of mechanisms to oversee every aspect of the care children receive. They continually seek to improve children's experiences and

have embedded a strong learning culture within the home. This approach supports children to make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Managers take the well-being of their staff seriously. They ensure that staff are well supported through regular supervision, team meetings, clinical reflections and training relevant to children's needs. Because of this, staff feel incredibly well supported and describe the home as feeling like a family. This ensures that children consistently receive excellent care from staff who are motivated and knowledgeable.

Managers have developed strong relationships with families and other agencies. They work hard to promote a collaborative approach to meeting children's needs. Such an approach ensures that children's needs are met promptly and that children have strong, well-informed networks of support helping them. Feedback from professionals was overwhelmingly positive. One professional said: '[name of home] is something special, it is exceptional.'

No requirements or recommendations were made during this inspection.

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: 2547611

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Registered provider address: Third Floor, Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Rachael Strange

Registered manager: Laura Cope

Inspector

John Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

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