

2547611

Registered provider: Hillcrest Childrens Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to 5 children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2024

At the time of this inspection, 5 children were living in the home. All children were seen and spent time with the inspector.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

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: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
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

Children living at the home are thriving and making exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives. At the time of the inspection there were five children living in the home. They have lived there between eighteen months and four years. The exceptional, sustained continuity of care has provided them with stability, supporting their sense of security and strengthening their feelings of belonging.

Children live in a warm, welcoming and homely environment. The home is personalised and unmistakably reflects the interests and personalities of the children who live there. Children's experiences and memories feature throughout the home, such as a height chart for all children who have lived there. This reinforces children's sense of identity and belonging. Children's bedrooms are beautifully decorated according to their choices, giving them ownership of their space and promoting comfort and security.

The registered manager and staff are unquestionably committed to the children. Children experience nurturing, trusting relationships with adults who genuinely care for them. This helps children to feel loved, highly valued and to flourish emotionally, socially and educationally.

Staff are highly motivated and resourceful in their practice. They use external research to inform and attune their support to children's individual needs. For example, when one child required additional support with their emotional well-being, staff applied research-informed approaches to understand the impact of the child's previous experiences. They adapted their practice by creating a sensory space where the child could spend calm, predictable time with trusted adults, helping them to feel safer in open spaces within their bedroom. As a result, children experience nurturing, responsive care that helps them feel understood and supports their ongoing progress.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for children's education and future achievements. All children are engaged in education, and their attendance is excellent. Staff maintain highly effective communication with education providers, ensuring teachers are well informed about children's needs and progress. This strong partnership working ensures children receive carefully coordinated support, resulting in sustained educational stability and excellent improvements in their learning experiences and outcomes.

Staff provide purposeful and versatile support to help children prepare for their futures. They promote independence at a pace that reflects each child's individual needs and readiness. As a result of the skilled care and comprehensive guidance offered by staff, two children are now preparing confidently to take the next step in their lives. One child said, 'the staff have helped me so much with my independence. Right from the start, they taught me how to look after myself and my self-care. I now do everything for me.' This demonstrates the significant impact of staff's nurturing and structured approach on children's growing confidence, self-reliance and readiness for adulthood.

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

Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable in safeguarding and risk management. Specialist training and clinical support further equip staff to understand and respond to children's individual and often complex needs. This ensures that children's vulnerabilities are comprehensively understood, and that staff have the skills and confidence to implement effective strategies to mitigate risks and promote children's safety.

Children enthusiastically say they love living in the home and that they feel safe. One child said, "I feel safe here; I have never felt safe before." Children are continuously involved in understanding and safety planning for their own vulnerabilities which increases their awareness of personal safety and helps them make safer decisions. This effective safeguarding practice ensures children are increasingly protected from harm.

Incidents of concern have significantly reduced. When they do occur, staff respond with confidence and clarity using professional curiosity to understand the reasons behind children's behaviour and to provide constant reassurance. For example, when one child's low self-esteem affected their emotional well-being, staff worked sensitively and creatively to help them develop coping strategies and alternative ways to communicate their feelings safely. This needs-led approach had an unmistakable impact on the child's sense of security and emotional resilience.

Staff are unquestionably proud of the children and successfully promote positive behaviours. Children's achievements are enthusiastically recognised; they receive written affirmations of their successes and a reward of their choice. These are creatively displayed on the home's "wall of fame", reinforcing a culture that celebrates progress and effort. Children are also provided with planned opportunities to reflect on incidents of negative behaviour. These reflective discussions help them to understand the consequences of their actions and support them to develop safer and more constructive ways of managing their emotions in the future.

When children raise concerns about staff these are thoroughly investigated. Concerns are shared appropriately with safeguarding partners and multi-agency procedures are followed. Children are supported, protected and kept informed of the outcome in a sensitive and age-appropriate way. Learning from incidents is used effectively to strengthen staff responses and improve the quality of oversight. As a result, children feel listened to, reassured and confident that any concerns they raise are taken seriously.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and deputy manager provide child-centred leadership that sets high expectations for practice. They demonstrate a cohesive commitment to continuous improvement. Staff feel highly valued. Leaders recognise and celebrate both children's and staff achievements, which promotes a positive culture of aspiration. This supportive and effective leadership ensures that children experience effective high-quality care.

The registered manager places a strong emphasis on ensuring that staff consistently apply their learning from training to their day-to-day practice. Children benefit from considerable care provided by a cohesive, stable and experienced staff team. Staff are unquestionably enthusiastic and go above and beyond for the children. Children enjoy spending time with them and seek their company at times of uncertainty.

Staff demonstrate an extensive understanding of children's needs, supported by professional experience and a commitment to evidence-informed practice. Their knowledge is continually strengthened through a programme of mandatory and need specific training. This training strengthens staff skills, enabling them to provide support that promotes children's emotional well-being, confidence and day-to-day progress. Consequently, children are better able to engage positively with routines, relationships and learning.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive regular, high-quality supervision, appraisals and targeted team meetings to provide reflective opportunities that drive improvements in practice. This effective oversight builds a confident, skilled workforce and directly contributes to excellent outcomes for children.

The registered manager and staff work effectively and in partnership with a wide range of professionals. Feedback from external agencies is typically positive and highlights the meaningful impact the staff's care and support have on children's lives. One professional reported that the continued nurture and support provided to one child had enabled them to recognise that aspects of their past experiences; previously normalised; were not safe. This demonstrates the significant role staff play in helping children develop insight, resilience and a stronger understanding of their own safety.

The registered manager and two staff members are currently outside the required timescales for completing their qualifications. This delay is due to a change in the education provider and is not attributable to the staff themselves. The registered manager has provided assurance that this is being addressed, and all staff concerned are now actively progressing their qualifications.

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

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) 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 person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Recommendations:

- All managers working in a children's home must have the qualification in regulation 28(2) within the relevant timescales listed in regulation 28(3). All staff in a care role, including external agency or bank staff, must have the qualification in regulation 32(4) within the relevant timescale listed in regulation 32(5)). In particular, the registered manager should ensure that all qualifications are completed as soon as possible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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 Childrens Services (2) Limited

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

Responsible individual: Rachael Strange

Registered manager: Laura Cope

Inspector

Julia Thompson, Social Care Inspector

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