

2576423

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home.

The home is led by a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

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: 14 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/11/2023	Full	Good
06/06/2022	Full	Good
15/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have experienced an unusual period of instability. This occurred while the manager had a period of unplanned absence. The service manager took over the day-to-day management of the home. This reduced some of the uncertainty caused by the manager's absence. The manager is now back. The children are more settled and continue to make positive progress.

Children have developed close, trusting relationships with the staff. They also get on with each other. A parent and professionals spoke positively about the way the staff care for the children. One parent said, 'I am grateful to the team. They are like another little family for [name of child].' This partnership working has enabled children to know that the adults involved in their lives are working collaboratively.

With one exception, the children are all attending school. One child's education placement was terminated, and staff are liaising with all relevant parties to identify an alternative provision for the child. This is crucial as staff are noticing that being out of education is having a negative impact on the child's emotional well-being.

Children are supported to maintain healthy lifestyles through a range of extra-curricular activities. They attend routine and specialist medical appointments. When children are reluctant to attend, due to anxiety or fear, the staff work with them to build up the confidence to attend. Children have access to emotional support through the internal therapist and through the child and adolescent mental health services as required. One young person utilises a local drop-in service. These various services assist the children with managing their emotions in a safer way.

Children are supported to move on positively. One child made immense progress before moving. They moved to a specialist home with education on site because no suitable school placements could be identified locally. Staff supported this transition and ensured that it went smoothly.

The eldest young person is due to move out, to live independently, in the coming months. She feels that she has been assisted well to be ready to go. This includes her doing her own shopping, cooking and budgeting each week. She is excited about her future. This is testimony to the care that staff have given her.

Children are supported to see their family members, including those who are a great distance from the home. Some are now having increased family time where their plans permit. These visits help to maintain the familial relationships.

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

The home experienced a spate of incidents. There is a clear understanding about why these occurred, and they are now decreasing. The recording of information, such as incidents, is comprehensive. Children are generally safer since moving into the home. It is evident that staff are successfully managing risks to children in a manner that keeps them safe from harm. Although children's behaviour is changeable, this is viewed as a sign that they feel safe enough to be themselves.

Staff carry out a wide range of direct work with the children. This includes sessions that address specific and general concerns, including those arising from incidents and significant events.

The children who arrived displaying severe self-harmful behaviour now do so less frequently and less severely.

Staff are providing consistent boundaries. At times, children struggle with the clear expectations being enforced, which leads to them becoming frustrated and annoyed.

A child said, 'It can be annoying not being allowed to do simple things.' However, she realised the rationale behind the decision being out of care and protection.

At times, children have gone missing from the home. The staff go looking for them and try to establish and maintain contact. Staff also work in partnership with relatives and relevant professionals throughout the child's absence. This communication has ensured that children return safely. Following these episodes, extra precautions and preventative methods have been put in place.

Bullying, although rare, has occurred. This has happened at home and at school. Staff have addressed it in a thoughtful manner. This sensitive approach has helped children to recognise when they have been unkind. It also ensures that the child experiencing bullying knows that staff listen to them and act on their concerns.

At times, there has been significant damage in the home. Children said that this can sometimes make their home feel less homely. The maintenance team attends regularly and carries out repair work as soon as is practicable. An example is the living room, where the new cabinets are already damaged. The replacements are on site waiting to be built. This demonstrates that repair work is carried out in a timely way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager addressed the issues identified at the last inspection before her extended leave. During her absence, the service manager, who was already familiar with the home and the children, skilfully took over. The service manager helped staff and children to navigate the unsettled feelings caused by the changes. The manager's return has been handled sensitively, and everyone is settling back into their usual routine.

The manager is ambitious for the children, the home, the staff and herself. She understands the children's needs and the progress they have made since moving into the home. Their plans include ongoing targets and overall aims, which ensures that everyone knows what they are working towards. The staff then create child-friendly versions of these plans for the children.

The manager continually updates processes and procedures in the home to ensure that they remain effective. She trials changes before proposing their implementation across the organisation. The location risk assessment has been updated with the children's views. This addition ensures that it includes aspects that staff might not have considered.

The managers are strong advocates for the children. They have submitted complaints to schools and placing authorities to ensure that children receive the services they need and deserve. For example, a recent complaint resulted in a child's outdated education, health and care plan being updated. This was necessary to ensure that schools had current information to aid them in placement decisions.

The manager and staff now create baby and memory books for the children to take with them when they leave. These books serve as a helpful reminder of how each child has grown and changed since moving into the home. The books also include information about the children's earliest days, which many of them may not readily know.

The manager has addressed poor performance of staff and failure to follow policies and procedures. This has resulted in staff receiving warnings (verbal/written) and being retrained. This demonstrates that the management team is monitoring and elevating the quality of practice in the home.

The manager researches various topics to educate the children and staff. Recent topics include cultural information about the children's backgrounds, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and black hair and skin care. This information helps the children to feel informed and gives them a sense of belonging.

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: 2576423

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Platform Childcare, Suite 2 Millennium Court, First Avenue, Burton-on-Trent DE14 2WH

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Sarah Gibbs

Inspector

Sonia Hay, Social Care Inspector

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