

2591431

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

Thorpe Lodge is a residential children's home that provides care and substitute parenting for up to eight children who have experienced emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is one of a number of children's homes operated by this private company. The company also operates a fostering agency.

The home and the current manager were registered in July 2020.

Visit dates: 20 to 21 October 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspection

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Since it was registered in June 2020, the home has provided care to two children. The manager has ensured that the admission of these children was well planned. The staff are able to meet the children's needs and the children are well matched.

The children's home is well furnished, maintained and spacious. The staff warmly welcome the children into their new home, with additional personal touches. This helps the children to feel valued and wanted.

The staff have supported the children effectively through the COVID-19 pandemic. They have helped the children to understand and follow changing public health guidance. The home's therapist has provided the children with additional support for their emotional well-being.

The children quickly build strong relationships with the caring staff. The staff keep the children active and there are daily walks or trips to local towns. The children enjoy lots of planned activities and craft activities in the house such as cooking and pumpkin carving. The children said that they have enjoyed pampering sessions and have fun with the staff. The silly games, such as who can run the fastest along the hall with a potato between their knees, or who can throw the most Wotsits on a shower cap covered with shaving foam worn by staff, have been a favourite.

The staff have encouraged and supported the children to participate in educational activities. The staff create household educational activities for the children, such as baking, and use these to give recognised Unit Award Scheme accreditation for their achievements. One child is thriving at the organisation's school. The staff have liaised with the other child's local authority to ensure that appropriate educational arrangements are in place.

The safety of children

There have been no significant incidents at the home. The children feel safe and well supported by the staff. The children's risk management plans provide clear guidance for the staff on areas of risk and how to reduce these. These risk management plans are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain current.

The children believe that the staff always have their best interests at heart. The children engage well in discussions about keeping safe. The help and support that the staff provide mean that children's individual risks reduce. For example, there have been no incidents of the children going missing from the home. This is a significant improvement in personal safety for both children.

The close relationships that the children develop with the staff and each other underpin their ability to resolve day-to-day issues amicably. As a result, the home is calm and settled.

The staff understand that children use behaviour as a means of communication. The staff help the children to identify what they are feeling, express this and explore why they feel this way. The therapeutic approach to behaviour management helps issues to be explored without situations escalating. Consequently, no physical restraint or sanctions have been used.

Leaders and managers

Management oversight is effective. The registered manager has ensured that this new home has got off to a good start. As a result, the children receive consistently good-quality care and support. The registered manager is leaving the home. However, he has mentored the new manager for some months, ensuring a seamless transition.

The manager has maintained suitable staffing arrangements that ensure the children continue to receive continuity of care.

The manager has recruited a team of staff with mixed levels of experience in residential childcare. The experienced senior staff guide and mentor the less experienced staff. The staff understand and implement the home's therapeutic approach. They are child focused and able to meet the children's needs.

Difficulty accessing face-to-face training during the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that staff have not yet received suitable first aid training. The staff have acted appropriately when children have been hurt. However, without suitable training, there is potential for the staff to not have the required skills and knowledge to deal with situations such as self-harm.

There have been no complaints about the home. The manager acts on feedback received from the children and fully explores any concerns. This ensures that the children feel listened to and valued. The manager and staff work closely and effectively with partner agencies, which consequently hold them in high esteem. A child's social worker said that they 'cannot fault' the manager and staff, who have provided 'outstanding' care and support for their child.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff can access appropriate resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, ensure that staff undertake suitable first aid training.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2591431

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Off Squirrel Way,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Samuel Foster

Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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