

2755434

Registered provider: Vita Nova NE Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to three children with emotional or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

There are three children currently living in the home. All the children were seen and spoken to as part of this inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 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: 30 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/04/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have exceptionally strong and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. The manager and staff work tenaciously to build and maintain these loving relationships with the children. The providers practice model 'love-led practice' shines through everything they do. Children tell their social workers and other professionals that they love living here and that the best thing about the home is the staff. They make significant progress in areas of their life, such as competing in sports and developing confidence, mental well-being and emotional stability.

Leaders and managers welcome children to the home who have experienced significant disruption in their lives. Staff's nurturing approach gives children a sense of acceptance and security. Children develop confidence in adults because of the staff's responsiveness in meeting the children's needs. As a result, children feel that they belong and refer to it as their home. One professional commented that a child had had so many moves that they did not think they would settle, but was very happy to have been proven wrong.

Managers and staff are aspirational for the children's education. They work tirelessly to ensure that children get the right support that enables them to access learning. They advocate for children who are struggling in school to have education, health and care plans to secure the long-term support that meets their needs. One child has progressed from struggling to attend school and needing staff support, to attending mainstream school and preparing for their GCSEs. Other children are empowered by staff who help them to develop their confidence, leading to them enrolling on college courses after periods of absence.

Staff encourage children to meet their own health needs as part of their planning for independence. Older children make their own health appointments and develop healthy eating plans. One child has overcome their fear of the dentist with the support of their key worker and, has engaged in therapy that has enabled them to trust adults so they can access support that meets their needs. The therapist described this child's progress as 'phenomenal'.

Children excel in developing other independence skills. One child has been applying for part-time work and an accreditation for national level go-kart racing, while another child thrives at cooking and has achieved their food hygiene certificate. Younger children help in the kitchen and are supported to take responsibility for personal hygiene and appearance. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that children develop their practical, financial and social skills, and acquire the skills they need to look after themselves when they leave home.

Family time for children has strengthened because of the relationships that staff develop with children's family members. Staff enable parents to undertake positive activities with their children to help nurture their relationships. One child now has unsupervised

overnight stays with their parents. Another child spent Christmas with their parent and sibling. This helps children to maintain their identity and remain connected to their families, while having a safe place to return to.

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

Children's risks reduce from living at this home. Staff's insight into the children's needs and vulnerabilities ensures that their practice is responsive. For example, they help children to understand the risks from the internet and social media. As a result, concerns for children have significantly reduced. Children's incidents of self-injurious behaviour have reduced notably because of staff's nurturing practice and support from the therapist. The child better understands their behaviour and can articulate their feelings around risk.

The manager and staff understand the triggers and patterns that precede children going missing. They adapt the children's missing protocols accordingly. One child has contributed to their own missing-from-home risk assessment. The manager undertakes trend analysis to identify patterns related to missing episodes and works in partnership with police, the missing-from-home coordinator and the provider's other homes. As a result, risks associated with missing episodes reduce.

Physical intervention is rarely used. Staff help children to calm quickly and reflect and learn from their behaviour. They help children to understand their struggles and develop strategies to overcome them. Staff promote positive behaviour in innovative ways across the home. Children have incentive schemes and awards, such as 'golden spoon', which are hotly contested. Providing children with positive praise is embedded in staff practice. Natural consequences are applied consistently and restoratively, and staff take the time to ensure that the children understand them. As a result, children show remorse and develop their empathy for others.

Partnership work with education colleagues helped to secure a referral for one child for specialist help around harmful behaviours. The manager worked closely with the child's school to ensure that their open lines of communication captured every concern about the child's behaviour. This led to a joint plan between the home and school with specialist support and helped to reduce risks quickly. This demonstrates the home's excellent safeguarding practice aimed at ensuring that children have the right support available to them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for the children. The atmosphere in the home is one of positivity. The home feels like a family home. The feedback from the staff is overwhelmingly positive and they thoroughly enjoy working at this home. This means that children are cared for by staff who greatly enjoy their work and see the children and colleagues as family.

The training offer for staff is comprehensive and progressive. Staff have access to a wide variety of training from experts and outside trainers. Additional development opportunities, such as learning lunches, are frequent. Team meetings incorporate a training element either from an external expert or a staff member with an interest in a particular area of practice. If staff are interested in particular topics, they can access further training. This helps to uphold a strong learning culture.

The manager has extensive monitoring systems for all aspects of the running of the home. Analytical practice is used to gain a better understanding of the children's needs and is shared with other professionals, who speak very highly of staff and the care provided to the children. They describe the progress that children make as 'remarkable and exceptional', highlighting the quality of the relationships that staff have with families as significant. Some social workers said that the home is one of the best homes they have worked with.

Practice-related supervision is regular, well planned and reflective. New staff receive more frequent supervision. Staff use daily books where they log and reflect on their day. This feeds into their supervision sessions and strengthens their learning. Children are discussed in depth with every member of staff in each supervision. Risks and risk management are prioritised to ensure that children experience consistent help. Staff find the supervision process highly supportive.

Children are empowered through frequent consultation to have a voice that is listened to and, at every opportunity, influence the care and support that they receive. For example, one child undertook a task to produce a fully costed business plan and a PowerPoint presentation for the senior managers to lobby for a revamp of their bedroom. This helps children to feel respected and know that their views are held in high regard.

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the home. They are committed to continually developing staff's excellent practice through mentoring and coaching. This is giving staff the skills they need to excel in their role and progress in their careers. As a result, staff feel supported and valued and, in turn, committed to providing children with the best possible care.

Staff are empowered to be creative in the way that they work with the children. They have excellent links with the local community and their neighbours. Staff and children take part in community events, such as contributing to the local foodbank and animal shelter. One child likes to help others and staff use this to help the child manage their emotions. The provider's model of care, 'love-led practice' underpins everything that staff do with children, consequently giving children the confidence to thrive and take on new experiences.

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: 2755434

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Vita Nova NE Ltd

Registered provider address: 58 Lanchester Road, Maiden Law, Durham, County Durham DH7 0QS

Responsible individual: Kathryn Cowen

Registered manager: Angela Harris

Inspector

Kirstie Sutherland, Social Care Inspector

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