

SC025812

Registered provider: McRae Residential Care Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to four children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered in June 1996. The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2012 and is suitably qualified.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 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: 15 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2023	Full	Good
30/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
10/11/2021	Full	Good
19/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A registered manager and a home manager lead the home. The home has a cosy and welcoming atmosphere. Children receive good-quality care from staff who are motivated and understand their individual needs and vulnerabilities. Children receive individualised care, which is reflected in their care plans, and they are supported to make good progress.

All children are supported to receive education. Some children are making very good progress, and one child has returned to education after a prolonged absence. The home's manager successfully advocated on behalf of this child to ensure that their educational needs were met and worked collaboratively with educational professionals.

One of the strengths of this home is the positive and trusted relationships developed between staff and children. Staff work sensitively with children to support them to understand their care plans, risks and vulnerabilities. This gives children a sense of responsibility and ownership over their day-to-day lives.

Staff are very child-centred. This approach allows children opportunities to develop emotionally and socially. One child said, 'The carers help me out. I have someone to talk to if I'm upset. If I get into any arguments, they'll help me deal with it in a way so that I won't get into trouble.' Children meet with the home's in-house therapist, who undertakes weekly sessions to support children's emotional health and well-being. This also contributes towards improvements in children's behaviours.

Children regularly attend a group run by the staff called 'teen talk'. These sessions give children the opportunity to share their views, discuss topics such as bullying and participate in decisions made about their home and care. Children also say that they know how to make complaints.

Children make progress in developing their independence skills. This is done through planned key-work sessions or ad-hoc discussions with staff around areas such as personal hygiene, budgeting and household chores. The staff and managers have worked hard with one child to safely balance behavioural risks against the child's increasing need for independence. Children take part in varied activities such as going to the gym, swimming, go-karting, bowling, football and trips to the cinema.

Children are supported to maintain positive and safe relationships with people who are important to them. The home is flexible in accommodating the need for children to spend time with their family and friends. If plans change, the home manager and staff will seek out alternatives and support children. As a result, children build on their self-identity, resilience and self-esteem. One child's parent said, 'Everything they're doing at the moment is brilliant. They're helping him.'

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

Incidents in the home are managed appropriately. Effective and appropriate action is taken in response, and there is good management oversight. Key-work sessions are held with children to address incidents of concern. Behaviour management is a strength of the home. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques, and restraint has not been used.

Missing-from-home episodes are rare at this home. Staff follow the missing-from-care protocols and manage missing episodes well. Police report that they have a positive relationship with the registered manager and staff and that there has been a reduction in missing-from-home episodes reported this year.

Leaders, managers and staff work proactively with agencies and partners in response to safeguarding concerns. This ensures that information is shared and that a holistic approach and plan of support can be agreed to promote the children's welfare and well-being.

The home's manager is proactive and seeks support from the local neighbourhood police unit to attend the home to speak with the children about contextual safeguarding matters.

Staff understand risks well. They identify patterns of behaviour and if there is an escalation in risks to children. Children's individual risk assessments are kept up to date to reflect their needs. Suitability assessments undertaken before admission are of good standard. They are realistic, detailed and consider the children's needs and the staff's skill set, experience and background. The assessments also demonstrate a strong understanding of how cultural similarities can positively impact children's experiences and sense of identity.

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the policies and procedures relating to the management of allegations against staff and whistle-blowing procedures. This helps to keep children safe.

Parents and professionals do not have any concerns regarding the safety of children. They report that the staff's effective and responsive communication further increases children's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers know the children well. They demonstrate insight, empathy, affection and understanding towards the children living at the home.

Leaders and managers have established effective relationships with external agencies. Multi-agency working is valued and has supported children to make good progress. The home manager has shown that she is a strong advocate for children and has advocated for them to access education and health services. The home

manager appropriately challenges local authorities on behalf of children. Leaders and managers seek regular feedback from stakeholders.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. Supervision gives staff the opportunity to discuss children's progress, reflect on their practice and help to identify individual training needs. Regular team meetings ensure that the staff come together to talk about children and their practice. The contribution of the home's therapist in team meetings is valued by staff. One staff member said, 'We can work with him around what may be going on for that young person. This means that we can support them better, pull together. He also informs us of new developments and research.'

Staff say that they feel valued. They say that their ideas are listened to and that there is a culture of respect in the home.

Staff receive good-quality annual appraisals, which include feedback from the children. This helps staff to identify areas for further training and career development opportunities.

The management team is open to the scrutiny that the independent person provides. However, it is important that the visits are in person and not a virtual meeting.

Children's records are not held in one place. Some children's records are kept on an electronic data system, while others are kept in other online drives and, in some cases, in paper folders and books. This could lead to some delay when staff need to access records quickly and may cause some confusion. The responsible individual and the management team are aware of this and are keen to make improvements to this.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the independent person makes monthly visits to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are stored safely and can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view it. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: SC025812

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: McRae Residential Care Services Limited

Registered provider address: 57 Lodge Road, Croydon CR0 2PH

Responsible individual: Kevin Henry

Registered manager: Paul Rhys-Taylor

Inspectors

Amanda Burrows, Social Care Inspector
Chelsea Agyeman, Social Care Inspector

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