

SC357455

Registered provider: Woodside House Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children of either gender. The age of the children ranges from 11 to 18 years old. The home is privately operated by a family partnership.

A registered manager has been in place since 2008. He has the relevant experience and qualifications for his post.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. This is the home's first inspection since September 2019.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 September 2021

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: 11 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2019	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
27/11/2017	Full	Good
23/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children in this home are exceptionally well cared for. They develop secure and trusting relationships with the staff. These are sustained for long periods and continue after children have left the home to become independent.

Children's progress from their starting points is outstanding. Staff have very high aspirations for children and inspire their engagement with education. Children in the home have 100% attendance at school. Staff demonstrate high levels of effective communication with schools and other external agencies and advocate strongly on behalf of the children in their care.

Staff provide a safe, stable routine and clear boundaries. Positive behaviour is encouraged, and realistic daily and weekly rewards are in place. This means that the children have something positive to look forward to and aim for each day.

Staff place a strong emphasis on providing children with opportunities which expand their life experiences. Children have access to lots of different activities in the home. In addition to home-based activities, children are encouraged to attend local clubs, the theatre, concerts and football matches and take regular holidays. These extra activities help the children by increasing their self-esteem and broadening their horizons.

Children grow physically and emotionally and become more stable as a result of living in the home. One child told inspectors that he 'ate better' and was 'fitter' since living at this home. Children describe the home as 'amazing' and 'good' and the staff as, 'amazing'. One child said, 'They are kind to me.' Children have consistency and flourish in this home, and some children have lived here for long periods of time. Inspectors spoke with a care leaver who described his time living in the home as 'the best seven years of my life'.

Staff in the home offer love, warmth and acceptance to the children in their care. Children like to spend time with staff, and they have developed warm and respectful relationships with each other.

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

Children feel very safe, well supported and extremely happy in this home. The staff know the children in their care very well. Each child has a highly detailed plan to support their behaviour and development. As a result, children received individualised care.

Managers have a good research-based understanding of child development and the impact of early life experiences. This knowledge enables them to make effective decisions about how to support each individual child. The supportive approach and expectation of positive behaviour have meant that incidents of children going missing from home or of being at risk of exploitation is extremely low.

Risk assessments are realistic, identify individual risks and, most importantly, they are very effective. Inspectors saw evidence that children's risks were reducing significantly over time from their starting points. Reductions were consistent and sustained. Children's risk assessments are individualised, very detailed and updated each month. The records evidence the very positive progression that the children are making.

Individual key-working sessions with the children link to their risks and needs and are tailored to support them to understand themselves. As a result, children are able to learn to make positive decisions for themselves. This is excellent progress.

Children are encouraged to build up their independence skills within safe boundaries. They are encouraged to spend time with friends and in their local community. This means that children are equipped with the skills and understanding to manage their own safety effectively and have freedom to spend time with friends.

A recommendation from the fire safety officer, that smoke detection tests take place weekly, has not been followed. Tests do take place, but not as routinely as recommended. There has been no negative effect on the children's safety, and the home has an operational fire alarm system.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and the responsible individual are passionate about providing a caring and comfortable home with a family emphasis, where children thrive and achieve excellent progress. Managers know the children and the staff team extremely well. The children in the home respond very positively to the calm and comfortable family environment, which is staffed by skilled, positive carers. Children have access to activities, ideas and opportunities that increase the aspirations they have for themselves.

The children's home has a small and very stable staff team. There is a small number of regular bank staff to bolster staffing arrangements when needed. Children know who is going to be there for them all the time. This arrangement helps them feel safe and secure.

Staff have access to regular reflective supervision with the manager. They also have access to annual appraisals to support them to identify any learning needs or career objectives. One member of staff has not yet received an annual appraisal. The registered manager, responsible individual and one full-time member of the staff team access regular independent therapeutic supervision. This additional and

specialised support enables them to reflect on how they continue to meet the needs of the children and improve the quality of care that they provide.

The staff and children described how the registered manager and the responsible individual stayed in the home for five months during the initial period of lockdown. This was to ensure safety and consistency for the children in their care and was an enormous personal sacrifice. The managers told us they wanted to be 'in this together' with the children.

Children told inspectors that the period of lockdown, during the COVID-19 pandemic, did not really affecting them. Children continued to thrive during this period. Staff made significant efforts to support them while simultaneously keeping them safe. Staff provided some education to children, while they stayed in the home to reduce the risk of them being exposed to COVID-19. Staff created fun activities in the home that kept the children positive, stimulated and happy.

The management team is happy to accept suggestions on how to improve. They reflect on the feedback and actions given as a result of the independent visits, Ofsted inspections and from monthly therapeutic supervision. This supervision allows the management team to discuss each child individually and to receive professional therapeutic input regarding the children's individual needs. It gives the staff the confidence to ensure that each child in their care has the right plan to help them feel safe, supported and to achieve.

Leaders and managers have excellent working relationships with partner agencies, schools and family members. This ensures the best possible care, experiences and futures for the children in their care. Inspectors received feedback from the children's school, social workers, an independent reviewing officer and a parent. They all describe very positive experiences of working with the staff and feel that staff provide exceptional support to children which ensures that they continue to make positive progress.

The managers are tenacious in their pursuit of good outcomes for the children in their care. They are genuine in their desire for the very best for the children they are looking after. Communication is effective with all agencies involved with the children in their care, and they pursue the right resources for them relentlessly.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislation. In particular, that fire alarm testing is carried out in accordance with the recommendations from the fire officer. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person must ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role appraised at least once annually. This specifically relates to one member of staff who has not received an annual appraisal. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC357455

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Woodside House Care Limited

Responsible individual: Alison Hayton-Gregg

Registered manager: Michael Gregg

Inspectors

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector
Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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