

SC366343

Registered provider: Maple Leaf Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately run and managed.

The home benefits from strong and effective leadership provided by two registered managers.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 January 2020

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	good
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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: 23 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
22/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
23/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
10/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- As set out in regulations 31– 33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people are extremely well supported, and the care that they receive is making a positive difference to their lives. Outstanding judgments have been made by Ofsted since 2010, and there is continued evidence of consistent exemplary practice. Young people have built strong and trusting relationships with the staff, who guide them, listen to them and invest time in them. A young person said, 'I got lucky moving here, [the manager] always finds ways to help.' Another young person commented, 'This is the best home I've ever been in. Staff look after you well. I really don't want to move.'

There is a strong focus on the benefits of education. Staff work in close partnership with education professionals and share ideas about what works best for young people's attendance and participation. One young person attained a number of GCSEs and is now attending college full time. One young person did disengage from education, but through staff perseverance is now engaging with a tutor. Young people's achievements are celebrated, and one young person's art coursework is proudly displayed in the home.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and they place the well-being of each young person at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges they may present. Young people have stability in their lives and have developed a sense of permanence and belonging. All young people have lived at the home for over a year. A placing social worker said, 'It's an excellent placement and X is attached to it. They [staff] go above and beyond.' A health professional commented, 'Without doubt, they [staff] support the young people's health needs. They know the kids inside out. They are very nurturing.'

The managers and staff have a strong understanding of the impact of trauma, and this informs their practice, helping young people to overcome their past difficulties, develop a positive self-view and increase emotional resilience. External professionals are extremely complimentary about the care and support that the young people receive. One professional said, '[Name of the home] is a breath of fresh air. Staff are so dedicated. We can't praise them enough.'

The home subscribes to an application called 'Mind of my own', which is referred to as 'MOMO'. This enables the young people to communicate with staff, their social workers and other professionals. Young people are enabled to voice their views, wishes and feelings via the application. Consequently, they do not feel the need to complain about the home and clearly feel valued and respected.

Young people are being well prepared to become more independent. For example, they are routinely involved in shopping, helping to prepare meals, doing their laundry and travelling independently. One young person has secured themselves a part-time job and is enjoying the independence that this brings.

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

Young people are safe in the home and said that they feel safe. They are able to talk to members of staff if they have any concerns. Young people engage well with specialist workers in relation to safeguarding, which provides them with opportunities to contribute towards their care and reduces risk when they are away from the home.

Staff place the safety and well-being of young people at the centre of their practice. Young people come to the home with some very high risk-taking behaviour, including drug misuse and going missing. Some young people show a reduction in these behaviours. Staff remain in contact with young people via their mobile phones when they are away from the home. When a young person goes missing, staff actively look for them and work closely with the police to ensure that they are found as quickly as possible.

A police officer who knows the young people very well and visits the home on a regular basis said, 'They are a shining example of how it should be done. They follow the procedures to the ninth degree. They keep tabs on the young people.'

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. There is a strong emphasis on the use of rewards and praise. Young people are clear about the rules and expectations of behaviour. Staff are well trained in behaviour management and use their skills and experience to good effect to support young people with their emotions. As a result, young people's behaviour has significantly improved over time. There have been no incidents of physical intervention since the last inspection.

Risk assessments identify the risks for young people that might arise from their individual risk-taking behaviours. However, risk assessments could be further improved by including how staff will support, manage and monitor young people should staff

suspect that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The manager accepted this shortfall and took steps to rectify this during the inspection.

Overall, there are thorough vetting and recruitment checks on all new staff. This ensures that young people are protected from unsuitable people. However, a shortfall was identified during this inspection, relating to gaps in employment for one member of staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home benefits from strong and effective leadership provided by joint registered managers. Both managers are inspirational and ambitious for young people and create a culture of positivity. Staff have utmost respect for the managers and feel that they provide strong leadership and lead by example. Managers can clearly demonstrate the positive impact that living at the home is having on the lives of the young people.

Managers and staff work proactively and positively with parents, social workers and other professionals to achieve the best possible outcomes and experiences for all young people. Managers have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the home. They make effective use of both internal and external monitoring to ensure that the high standards of practice are maintained.

Staff confirmed that they receive regular and effective supervision. Managers ensure that the team is up to date with research, theory and guidance. This is integrated into practice and provides young people with a high level of support.

The staff team is experienced, and most members hold a level 3 childcare qualification. Staff spoken to during the inspection clearly enjoy their work and confirmed that the team members work well together. Staff development is fully supported by managers. Training completed since the last inspection includes sexual exploitation, understanding self-harm among children and adolescents and developing and maintaining relationships. This investment in staff development ensures that they remain highly motivated to provide the best possible care for young people.

The home is working in line with its statement of purpose. The one recommendation made at the last inspection has been addressed. Managers create a culture of high aspiration and positivity and they have high expectations of the staff to change and improve the lives of the young people whom they are responsible for.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows

about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC366343

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Maple Leaf Care Limited

Registered provider address: 16a Regent Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 1RP

Responsible individual: Morgiana Nazerali

Registered manager: Nicola Higham
Susan Murfitt

Inspector

Michelle Bacon, social care inspector

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