

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 and accommodation for four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately run and managed.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people benefit from a safe, highly supportive, caring and very nurturing environment. Staff provide young people with continuity of care. Consequently, young people benefit from consistency and stability in their lives. Young people make significant progress taking into account their individual starting points across all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Young people benefit from extremely well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively and contributes to significant change and improvement in their lives. Young people are kept safe and have a strong sense of personal safety. The safety of young people is consistently at the centre of staff practice, irrespective of the challenges this presents.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific needs and vulnerabilities and take appropriate steps to address them. Young people become significantly safer as a result of the actions that staff take to support, help and protect them. Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm.
- Young people enjoy warm and secure relationships with caring, well-qualified, trained and experienced staff. They benefit from positive role models and have staff whom they can look up to and learn from. Staff are absolutely passionate about the young people and they strive to achieve the absolute best possible outcomes for them.
- Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with social workers, schools and all other professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help, protection and all-round support.
- There are highly effective arrangements for reviewing the standard and quality of young people's care. Leaders and managers make positive use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to secure improvement and positive outcomes for young people. The home is managed efficiently and effectively by ambitious and enthusiastic staff, leaders and managers.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people receive considerable support to promote their education and learning. However, not all young people are currently attending school or alternative educational provision on a full-time basis to enhance their educational achievement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
10/08/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are in full-time education while they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there have been three new admissions to the home. Young people who are new to the home have settled in quickly and are making positive progress. Transitions to and from the home are managed effectively, and this ensures that young people living at the home are appropriately placed and matched. A young person reported, 'I've been here for about seven weeks. I like it here. It's way better than foster care.'

Staff provide young people with a highly supportive, extremely caring and nurturing environment. Staff recognise the impact of young people's earlier childhood experiences and how childhood trauma can impact on young people's feelings and behaviour. Staff are able to identify the underlying reasons for young people's specific behaviour. They respond to young people in a sensitive, understanding and compassionate way. They help young people to explore their own feelings and behaviour in a safe and positive way. As a result, young people can talk to staff and work through any difficulties they may have. Young people experience positive, trusting and high-quality relationships with staff. An independent reviewing officer reports,

'Staff are very committed to her. I wouldn't want to see the placement break down as she's already had a lot of moves. I am happy with the care provided. Staff seem very approachable and the home is friendly and warm. They know her very well, and they're committed and don't want to let her down.'

Staff provide young people with continuity of care so they have consistency and stability in their lives. Young people enjoy living at the home and develop a strong sense of permanence and belonging. Young people benefit from effective, high-quality support from staff. One young people reported,

'I love all the staff, who are dead nice. I can't think of anything to change, to be honest. It just feels more like home. It was easy to get used to being here. I already feel like I lived here for ages. I feel more settled and I have a permanent place to live. I'm happy here.'

Staff help young people to make sense of their experiences and provide a safe environment in which they can discuss and address, any issues they may have. They provide young people with positive experiences, and well planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively and contributes to change and improvement in their lives. Young people make considerable progress taking into account their individual starting points across all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development.

A social worker reported, 'They try at length to engage her in activities, and she does have a very good relationship with staff. She's difficult to place... Partnerships with the home are fantastic. We get weekly updates and they ring me immediately, if there's any issues. They're able to deal with any issues that she may have.'

Many of the young people who come to live at the home have complex needs and a history of non-attendance at school. Staff provide young people with the support they need to resume their education at the earliest opportunity. They work pro-actively and positively with the virtual school headteacher, teachers and social workers to secure appropriate educational provision for young people.

There are clear expectations for young people to attend school regularly, and opportunities are provided within the home to promote young people's progress and learning. For example, young people are provided with books and a wide selection of reading materials, and have access to a personal computer. Relevant plans are in place to promote young people's educational achievement. However, not all young people are receiving at least twenty-five hours of education a week to maximise their learning. That said, the home is working pro-actively with all professional agencies to secure improved educational outcomes for young people. One young person, recently admitted, reported, '[The manager] has been really supportive with school. I've missed about two years of school and now I'm starting college. I am going to be doing hair and beauty, English and maths.'

A tutor who works with another young person reported,
'She's doing really well. A few weeks ago she had no confidence. Now, she'd get a grade in her GSCE in maths. She's making rapid progress. The staff are very good with her. She's doing really well taking into consideration where she was at... Our package offers her different experiences and she can see her own progress. The staff are great. She's had two PEP meetings in recent weeks, and this is how crucial her education is. It's about being really creative. We are consistent and very honest with her, and she really gets that.'

Young people's health needs are identified and met really effectively. Young people are registered with the health services they need to stay healthy and enjoy good health. They have access to specialist support at the intensity and frequency required to promote their emotional and psychological well-being. Medical consent is in place and staff are clear about what types of health decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them. Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with all health professionals to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. They

provide young people with excellent advice and support on key health issues, and actively encourage them to lead and maintain a healthy and positive lifestyle. As a result, young people take responsibility for their own health. Staff are trained in recognising and addressing self-harm and can administer emergency treatment, if needed.

Young people's talents, interests and hobbies are actively supported and encouraged. Young people benefit from a wide range of positive activities at the home and in the wider community. They receive the support they need to experience new and exciting activities to enhance their social skills and self-confidence. Staff facilitate contact taking place so that young people can keep in touch with their friends and families. Consequently, young people sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them.

Young people are allowed to take appropriate risks to promote their growth and natural development. They develop their practical skills in shopping, cooking and budgeting to promote their readiness for independence and adulthood. Young people are consulted in relation to all aspects of their care. They are meaningfully involved in all key decisions, so they can contribute towards the running of their home. This includes all aspects of care planning and daily living. For example, young people are meaningfully involved in their care plans and risk assessments and have a good knowledge and understanding of them. As a result, young people know what individual targets and goals they are working towards. This helps them to meet and exceed their goals, and these successes are celebrated.

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

Staff consistently place the safety of young people at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges this presents. Staff have an excellent understanding of the group's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them. Young people become significantly safer as a result of the actions staff take to support and protect them. The use of clear and robust risk assessment and highly effective safe-working practice promotes the safety and well-being of young people.

Risks associated with young people are managed safely and effectively by well trained, highly experienced and competent staff. Young people are kept safe and develop a very strong sense of personal safety. Unsafe, risk-taking behaviours, such as self-harm, substance misuse, offending, anti-social behaviour and going missing from care for long periods, reduce significantly upon admission to this home, and young people are safer and less likely to suffer actual harm. There are highly effective systems and arrangements are in place to find young people promptly if they are absent or go missing. Staff actively look for them and maintain highly effective partnerships with the police and other safeguarding agencies to locate young people quickly and promote their safe return.

Staff are well trained regarding child protection, e-safety, radicalisation and awareness of child sexual exploitation and understand their roles and safeguarding responsibilities in keeping young people safe. They know how to deal with allegations, and how to

recognise and report suspected abuse. Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities. Consequently, young people are safeguarded effectively by the appropriate professionals charged with a duty to protect them.

A social worker reports, 'I have always found the staff to be really on the ball when it comes to information sharing, managing risk and vulnerability and ensuring the child's best interests are at the forefront.'

Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are championed effectively. That said, there have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people have access to professional advocates to support them, and staff will always advocate on a young person's behalf. A social worker reported,

'We are trying different techniques to motivate him. We have tried various things and it's an ongoing process. The home have been really good with him. The staff have done everything I have asked them to do and gone above and beyond. He's safe and no longer goes missing.'

There are highly effective arrangements in place to promote young people's positive behaviour. For example, positive behaviour is consistently praised, acknowledged and reinforced. Staff's knowledge of individual young people's needs has undoubtedly helped them to develop individual plans and strategies to address and reduce negative behaviour. Consequences for negative behaviour are proportionate and fair, when used. Staff anticipate issues exceptionally well and understand the triggers for young people's behaviour.

The use of restraint is exceptionally rare, and is only ever used to protect young people from harm. The staff team is skilled and competent in managing all forms of behaviour. They help young people to resolve their conflicts positively and encourage them to self-regulate their own feelings and behaviour. Staff are effective role models whom young people look up to and learn from.

The accommodation provided for young people is physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, welcoming and homely. The home is decorated to an exceptionally high standard. Repairs are undertaken promptly to maintain a homely and safe environment for young people. Young people are consulted in relation to the furnishing of their home. Their bedrooms are highly personalised and reflective of their needs, wants, feelings and wishes. Various framed photographs of young people and staff are proudly displayed within the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Staff meet and exceed the aims and objectives, as set out, in the home's statement of purpose. They consistently deliver an outstanding quality service for young people that contributes to significant change and improvement in their lives. Leaders and managers are consistently ambitious, enthusiastic and passionate about sustaining the home's improvement. The home benefits from strong leaders and managers who prioritise the

needs of young people and maintain strong and highly effective partnerships with all other professional agencies to ensure that they benefit from the best possible help, protection and all-round support.

A social worker reports, 'Staff have demonstrated their willingness to go the extra mile in order to match provision to need... They have shown the capacity to work with children who have very complex needs. Very effective communication. There is a strong sense of partnership working.'

Both registered managers are extremely well qualified, and have a wealth of knowledge and experience between them. They are absolutely dedicated professionals who lead staff by example and manage the home with clear purpose, effective management oversight and direction. This ensures that staff are well managed, supported, motivated and led. A staff member reported, 'As a care worker who is involved in the day-to-day care of our young people, our opinions are valued and managers listen to our views... It's by far the best children's home I've ever worked in.'

Staff's performance is enhanced and developed through regular team meetings, practice-related supervision and appraisal. There is a strong focus on staff personal and professional development and training. The training needs of all staff are identified and met. All staff are suitably qualified, well trained and experienced workers who understand the relevant theories that underpin and inform their practice. This ensures that staff have the collective skills, knowledge and experience to meet the specific and individual needs of the young people.

The staff team shares and embraces the home's ethos, approach and philosophy in caring for young people. They work effectively as a team and consistently strive to achieve the absolute best outcomes possible for every young person. Staff practice results in sustained improvement to young people's lives.

The performance of the home is monitored effectively each month. The home is visited by an independent professional who scrutinises the home's practices and makes an impartial judgement about the quality of young people's care and the home's arrangements to safeguard them effectively and promote their well-being. Additionally, leaders and managers also undertake their own robust monitoring activities. They have an excellent understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate action to secure improvement.

Staff employed are vetted and selected carefully to ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable people. Visitors to the home are closely chaperoned and there is strict and suitable monitoring of such people.

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 managers: Nicola Higham and Susan Murfitt

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, social care inspector

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