

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC366343
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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
	Susan Murfitt
Inspector	Anthony Kyem

Inspection date	23/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC366343

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people benefit from a warm, caring, highly supportive and nurturing environment. Care planning is extremely well planned and practice is highly individualised to meet the specific needs of the young people at the home. Young people benefit from effective, high-quality support from staff that contributes to change and improvement in their lives across all aspects of their welfare, physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Young people enjoy strong and positive relationships with staff, and have stability and consistency in their lives.
- Staff consistently place the safety of young people at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges that this presents. Young people become increasingly safe as a result of the actions that staff take to support and protect them. Staff have a good understanding of young people's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them. Young people are kept safe and have a very strong sense of personal safety.
- Young people benefit from committed, enthusiastic and dedicated staff whom they trust, respect and look up to. Young people have positive views about the home, and their relationships with staff are equally positive. Staff consistently have high aspirations for young people and work proactively and positively with the providers of their education to promote their educational achievement.
- The home provides young people with a safe, warm, comfortable and homely environment. Staff consistently maintain a high-quality environment for young people. They meaningfully involve them in the running of the home so that they develop a real sense of ownership and belonging.
- Staff work enthusiastically with the families of young people, social workers, schools and other professional agencies to meet their specific needs and ensure that they benefit from the best possible help and all-round support.
- The performance of the home is scrutinised effectively by an independent person, who is employed to review the quality of young people's care and the arrangements to safeguard them and promote their well-being. The home meets the aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose. It consistently delivers a high-quality service for young people and their families.
- The home benefits from highly effective leadership and management delivered by both managers. Staff are supported effectively, and are managed and led well. The management stimulate staff's enthusiasm and channel their efforts effectively. The management is consistently ambitious and energetic about the home's continuing development and improvement.

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that relevant plans are obtained from the placing authority. This relates specifically to obtaining up-to-date care plans and relevant plans from the placing authority. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

The home is privately owned and managed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
10/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/09/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people who have left the home since the last inspection have done so in a well-planned and positive way. They have left to live with foster families or moved to other alternative care provision. Young people who are new to the home have settled in quickly and been made to feel welcome by staff. Young people make continuous progress across all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. They are kept safe and develop a very strong sense of personal safety. Young people reported: 'I was in foster care before. I prefer it here and I'm not sure why. I just like it that there's lots of different kinds of people. I don't know how to explain it – it's fun because they're really nice people. Staff make you laugh so much. They're proper happy and bring a positive environment. Yes, I feel safe. I didn't at first, but you don't, do you, when you first move. I do now.' Young people benefit from very well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively, and leads to change and improvement in their lives. They benefit from staff who spend quality time with them, both individually and in groups. This enables them to develop meaningful and secure relationships with staff. Young people benefit from a continuity of care that provides them with stability and consistency in their lives. Staff provide them with a warm, safe, caring, highly supportive and nurturing environment. An independent reviewing officer (IRO) reported, 'I'm the IRO for a young person whom I've been reviewing since March. She has already had a few moves this year. I met with her last week at her review. She appears to be liking the residential home and staff have been engaging her. Residential was the last resort but, after several foster placement breakdowns due to non-investment, non-engagement and many missing from home episodes, we are making some progress, albeit it is early days. Staff report that she is staying and not going missing, and is making use of the residential placement and the facilities on offer.' The health needs of young people are identified and met effectively. Effective arrangements are made to promote their good health. Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians, and have access to these services when they need them. This includes access to specialist support to promote their emotional and psychological well-being. Staff provide advice and support about key health issues, and actively encourage the young people to lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle. They educate them about the dangers of taking drugs and help them to make positive lifestyle decisions so that they can be responsible for their own	

health. Medical consent has been requested to ensure that staff are clear about what health decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them.

Young people attend school or alternative educational provision with effective support and encouragement from staff. When school becomes difficult for young people, staff work positively and proactively with their schools and social workers to address those difficulties to enable them to resume their education. The home works constructively and enthusiastically with the providers of young people's education to promote their educational achievement.

Relevant plans have been requested from the placing authority, where these are overdue, with some success, for example care plans and/or personal education plans for the young people. Staff have consistently high aspirations for the young people and the home provides them with access to the equipment that they need to support their learning, such as an area for study and access to a personal computer.

Young people reported: 'School is fine and I've got high grades, but I need to catch up in my lessons. It's the best place I've lived in, so far. I feel settled here and I'm not just saying that because you're from Ofsted. It's not like we're a big, happy family – it's just that we all get on with each other.'

Staff recognise the importance of contact for young people. They actively promote contact to ensure that young people can sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. Young people are well supported to keep in contact with their friends and families, and this includes appropriate arrangements for them having overnight stays.

Staff allow young people to take appropriate risks to promote their growth and natural development. They work with young people to develop their emotional resilience, practical skills and self-confidence. They help to prepare them for the challenges that they will face in life so they can withstand difficulties and setbacks. Young people are supported through one-to-one working that provides them with the guidance, advice and support that they need to manage their daily lives. Staff teach them practical skills in cooking, shopping and budgeting to promote their readiness for adult life.

Staff provide young people with positive and enjoyable activities, both at home and in the wider community. As a result, they develop their social skills, specific interests and hobbies. Young people enjoy a broad range of activities, such as arts and crafts in the home, 'pamper nights' and going to the cinema, theme parks, snooker and snowboarding.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people benefit from effective support, help and protection. They become increasingly safe as result of the actions that staff take to support and protect them. Staff actively promote the safety of young people, irrespective of the challenges that this presents. Staff have a positive understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the young people, and take appropriate action to address them. Young people are kept safe and have a very strong sense of personal safety. Social workers reported: 'The home provides her with a stable, secure environment that assisted her to settle as quickly as she did, forming positive working relationships with staff that helped her to keep safe within the realms of information disclosed. It was evident from the early stages that she felt emotionally secure, and this was demonstrated by her behaviour and level of reduced risk. The short-term intervention enabled her to have a period of calm.' Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Staff are trained in child protection and know how to deal with allegations and to report suspected abuse. Staff employed at the home are selected and vetted very carefully to ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable people. Visitors to the home are closely chaperoned, and there is suitable monitoring of such people. Staff provide young people with effective support that enables them to understand the risks that they face when they are out in the community. They encourage them to stay safe and keep in regular contact with the home. Staff provide effective support through group work and one-to-one working on a range of safety issues to raise young people's knowledge and awareness. Additionally, the home uses external services to offer young people advice and support about risk-taking behaviours, such as knife crime, child sexual exploitation and drug use. As a result, young people develop their awareness about safety issues and know how to protect themselves from harm. Young people reported, 'Staff teach us about safety. How to keep in touch and look out for strangers, and make sure we're not being followed.' The frequency with which young people are absent or go missing is decreasing. Staff follow effective procedures to locate young people if they go missing. They actively look for them to promote their safe and quick return. Staff maintain highly effective working partnerships with the police and other safeguarding agencies to keep young people safe from harm. Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address any	

welfare concerns. As a result, young people are safeguarded and protected effectively.

Staff help young people to understand the impact and consequences of negative behaviour. There is effective use of restorative practice that encourages young people to take ownership of their behaviour and find solutions to put right any wrongdoings. Young people benefit from clear rules and safe boundaries that encourage their positive behaviour.

The use of sanctions as a consequence of unacceptable behaviour is fair and proportionate. Restraint is a last resort, and if used at all, it is only ever to protect the young people from harm. That said, there have been no restraints since the last inspection.

Staff consistently maintain a high-quality environment for young people, who benefit from a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. The home is furnished and decorated nicely, and young people's bedrooms are highly personalised in accordance with their needs, wants and wishes. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively to promote a safe environment for young people, visitors and staff.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The home benefits from a well-qualified, trained and highly experienced management team that demonstrates strong and effective leadership of the operation of the home. The managers are consistently ambitious and enthusiastic about the home's continuing development and improvement. The post-holders stimulate staff's enthusiasm and channel their efforts to excellent effect. Staff are well supported and led, and are effectively managed. Staff supervision takes place regularly and practice is appraised each year. The training needs of staff are identified and met effectively. Staff benefit from regular, high-quality training to support them in the work that they perform. All staff are suitably trained, experienced and well qualified. Leaders and managers ensure that staff's practice is informed by training and current research that enhance their knowledge, skills and professional practice. For example, staff are trained in attachment theory and use this exceptionally well to inform their practice. Leaders and managers keep up to date with research and practice developments, for example current thinking around child sexual exploitation and the importance of ongoing multi-agency working. Staff work creatively and energetically with the young people and consistently have high behavioural expectations of them. Staff build and maintain highly effective	

partnerships with their families, social workers, schools and other professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. There were no recommendations from the last inspection. The home has a proven track record and an outstanding inspection history.

The home meets and exceeds the aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose, thus providing a high-quality service for young people and their families. The care that the home provides for young people makes a significant and positive difference to their lives. A letter received by the home from a previous resident young person stated: 'I wanted to say "thank you". I now realise and understand why you protected me so much. I have learned a great deal. I am very grateful to you because, without your protection, I wouldn't be where I am today... Keep doing well in keeping other young people safe.'

The management team escalates concerns appropriately and professionally challenges any decisions that it believes are not in the best interests of young people. Managers actively contribute to review meetings and prioritise the needs of the young people effectively. The managers are absolutely passionate about the young people and they strive to achieve the best outcomes possible for them. A social worker reported: 'I wanted to thank the home for all of the hard work that it did with (the young person), continually "going above and beyond" for her and staying in constant contact with us all here in order to keep her safe.'

Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively. There have been no complaints since the last inspection and none were raised by young people during this inspection. Young people have access to advocates to support them and make representations on their behalf. Staff actively listen to young people and act on their reasonable requests. The views of young people underpin all aspects of staff practice, and influence the way in which the home operates, develops and performs. Young people are meaningfully involved, and are able to contribute to and influence the running of the home.

Young people benefit from a home that is consistently managed both efficiently and effectively. There are effective systems for scrutinising the performance of the home to review the standard and quality of young people's care. The management team makes effective use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities, and has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The managers track young people's progress effectively and take appropriate action to secure improvement.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance, 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017