

SC398386

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A large private company owns this children's home. It registered with Ofsted in July 2009 and provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2016 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2025

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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/07/2024	Full	Good
24/05/2023	Full	Good
14/11/2022	Full	Good
22/09/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a stable, structured and supportive home environment in which they have positive experiences and make good progress. Since the last inspection, two children had positive moves on from the home and two children have moved in.

Staff's calm and nurturing approach helps children to feel loved and cared for. Their good understanding of children's needs has helped each child to develop. A professional said about one child, 'They really understood him, and he has blossomed.' Children learn to develop strong, positive relationships based on mutual respect. They view the staff team and the other children as their family and continue to do so, keeping in touch when they leave.

Staff understand the importance of education. When children struggle, staff work alongside education professionals to implement new strategies to support children's continued engagement and progress in education. One education professional said, 'The home has worked with us to evolve plans as needed and this can change dramatically. They have bent over backwards to work proactively and flexibly.'

Staff ensure children are well equipped with the skills needed before moving on from the home. They have devised practice sessions to test out children's newly learned independence skills in safe environments. This gives children the confidence needed and the best chance of success when they move on from the home.

Children have opportunities to build memories and have fun. Since the last inspection, children have enjoyed holidays together abroad and in the UK. Children's birthdays and other events are celebrated in a way that makes children feel special. For example, a huge celebration was organised for two children moving on, which was well attended by many people who were significant in the children's lives. In addition, even when they are not working, staff take the time to attend important events in the children's lives, for example, children's football matches. Staff capture children's time in the home in beautifully presented memory books. Staff ensure that children feel valued and that their achievements are celebrated.

The home is well maintained and well decorated. It feels homely and child centred. Photos of the children dominate the walls. Home furnishings are of a high standard, and children's rooms are personalised. The home boasts a large child-friendly garden with well-maintained equipment, including swings, a trampoline, goalposts, skate ramp and table tennis table. Children have had input into the garden design, choosing plants to enhance the homely feel. This provides children with a home they can be proud of and want to live in.

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

Children are happy living in the home. They are supported by staff who understand the importance of structure and routine in helping the children to feel safe and secure. Staff have implemented strategies based on research to support positive routines. For example, they introduced calming low-level sensory lighting into children's evening routines. Music was also introduced as a strategy to help children manage their emotions in times of distress. These strategies have had a positive impact on children's well-being and resulted in a reduction in incidents.

Staff respond quickly and effectively when children's risk of going missing from the home increases. They take time to listen to children to understand the reasons behind this. They use this information to devise successful strategies that have reduced the likelihood of a child going missing from the home again.

Staff regularly hold meaningful conversations with children and reinforce important messages to help children make positive choices. In addition, staff work with other professionals to help children understand risks to their safety. This gives children the knowledge and understanding to help them to stay safe.

The use of physical intervention to manage incidents is minimal. When it is used, it is proportionate to keep the child and others safe. Managers provide opportunities for children and staff to discuss and reflect on the use of physical interventions to ensure its use is appropriate and safe.

Children know how to raise concerns and staff support them to do so. Managers ensure that all allegations or complaints are shared with appropriate professionals, and thorough investigations take place. Children are informed of the outcome of investigations. This gives children the confidence that if they have a concern, it will be taken seriously and acted on.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a strong and inspirational manager who has high aspirations for the children and the staff team. They are aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and take action to ensure that children have good experiences and achieve positive outcomes.

The manager is well respected by the staff team and senior managers. One member of staff said, 'I feel blessed to have such a brilliant mentor.' The manager encourages staff to reflect and learn from their experiences and provides regular opportunities for their development.

Managers and staff ensure children have a stable and nurturing home and go the extra mile for them. As a result, children want to live here. Two of the children living in the home have lived there for six years and four years. When there are challenges and children's needs increase, the manager and the staff team do not give up on children.

They are persistent in providing the right support, which lets children know that they are cared for and that staff are there for them.

Leaders and managers are creative and innovative in their approach. They research new and different ways of working with children and their particular needs. Managers ensure that staff adapt their approaches based on this research. This has had a significant positive impact on helping children to establish positive routines, engage in education and improve their well-being. This practice demonstrates a dedicated approach to improving the lives of the children in their care.

Children are cared for by a consistent and stable team of staff who enjoy their work. One member of staff said, 'To see how their lives have changed and how much progress they make is the reason I keep coming back each day.' There is low staff turnover, which means children are cared for by staff who know them well and want to work with them.

Leaders and managers work creatively and collaboratively with a range of partner agencies to secure the best outcomes for children in their care. One professional said, 'I am so pleased [name of child] is there. They are excellent working with us... Staff are fantastic. He sees consistency with staff...and positive relationships from people who care for him.'

There are systems in place to capture children's views and wishes. The manager and staff team are also sensitive to children's behaviour and moods and take the time to understand the reasons behind them. The manager ensures that they dedicate individual time to each child to ensure that they feel recognised, valued and understood.

There were no requirements or recommendations raised at this inspection.

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: SC398386

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hillcrest Children's Services (2) Limited

Registered provider address: Maybrook House, Third Floor, Queensway, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 4AH

Responsible individual: Rachael Strange

Registered manager: Helen Sulley

Inspector

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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