

SC398391

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The privately owned children's home provides care for up to three children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and complex behaviours.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in 2014. She is suitably qualified.

Visit dates: 29 to 30 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 18 June 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children say they are happy living in this home. The registered manager and staff know the children well. They demonstrate a good understanding of children's needs. They respond to children sensitively and with compassion, which means that children make good progress.

Staff build positive relationships with children and they feel listened to. As a result, children feel safe and secure and there has been a reduction in incidents in the home.

The manager and staff work alongside an in-house clinical team. As a result of guidance and advice from the clinical team, staff respond appropriately to children's complex needs. Children's emotional and mental health is well supported. Children told the inspectors that they enjoy completing 'key work'. This encourages them to reflect and develop strategies to manage their feelings safely.

Children are supported to keep in touch with family and friends. During the lockdown period, they were able to maintain contact via telephone or online. Children were supported by staff to understand the social distancing restrictions and therefore, they adapted well to change.

During the lockdown period, children were educated in the home by teachers from the organisation's school. This provided a level of continuity for the children. Staff worked alongside teachers and facilitated activities such as forest walks, gardening, treasure hunts and camping. Staff's creative approach to education ensured that children received a good level of education despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

Children's memories are captured through photographs and are stored in beautiful and personalised memory books. These books provide children with a valuable record of the time they spent living in the home.

The safety of children

The registered manager has made changes to risk assessments. This means that staff now have access to up-to-date plans for each child. This ensures that staff have all the information that they need to keep children safe.

Staff develop positive, trusting relationships with children. These relationships enable staff to understand and respond to children's complex behaviours. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, children have continued to make progress socially and emotionally.

Since the last inspection, there has only been one incident that required staff to physically intervene. This is because staff have supported children living in the home to develop skills to safely manage their feelings. When incidents of concern have

occurred, good oversight by managers has meant that these have been reported quickly.

There have been no incidents of children being reported missing from the home.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has made changes to how medication is managed in the home. These changes are now embedded into staff practice. As a result, there have been no medication errors.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is experienced and passionate about the children living in the home. She has worked hard to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection.

Management oversight of the home has improved. However, on occasions, staff are not given guidance about how to engage children in bespoke work to support their social and emotional development. This means that there are missed opportunities for children to participate in more individualised targeted work.

Children benefit from care from a small but stable staff team. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when staffing shortages have arisen, they have been covered by internal staff or by staff from within the organisation. Agency staff have not been used. This has helped to maintain a consistent level of care for children during this period of uncertainty.

Staff receive training that reflects the individual needs of the children. Consequently, staff have the required knowledge and skills to help them to meet children's needs.

Staff receive regular supervision and told the inspectors that they feel supported by managers within the home.

The registered manager has established strong connections with partner agencies. Professionals are unanimously positive about the communication with the staff team and about the care provided for children.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential, and uses monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home (Regulation 13(1)(a)(h))	27/11/2020
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Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC398391

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

Registered provider address: Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JG

Responsible individual: Clive Coombs

Registered manager: Carina McLean

Inspectors

Annemarie Parker, Social Care Inspector
Sarah Berry, Social Care Inspector

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