

2769759

Registered provider: Silver Birch Care (Residential Services) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

There were three children living in the home at the time of this inspection. Two of the children were spoken to at this inspection.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 December 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive a warm welcome and are helped to settle in when they move into the home. Where possible, the registered manager visits children where they are living before a planned move into the home to support a positive transition. One social worker said the staff were very good at getting what they needed for the child for their first weekend in the home. Furthermore, the child's bedroom was quickly personalised to help them adjust to their new home.

Staff know the children well and speak about them with care and compassion. They use therapeutic approaches to help children manage their emotions. Staff are skilled at managing occasions when a child presents with heightened behaviour and are able to provide them with support instead of the situation escalating.

Staff promote children's education. One child, whose school is at a distance from the home, is supported every day by staff who accompany them on their journey to and from school. When children do not have a school place, staff accommodate for the local authority's temporary arrangements tuition to take place in the home and offer children alternative educational activities.

Children's care plans are individualised and detailed. Plans outline children's needs and how to support them to make progress. However, children are not consulted with about their care plans or involved in updating them.

Family time is promoted, and staff support children to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. Staff are flexible in managing complex arrangements and keep children's social workers well informed after family time has taken place. If plans change, staff are quick to make an alternative arrangement and support children.

Children build positive relationships with other children in the home. Staff are vigilant and recognise if there is a change in children's behaviour or difficulties between children. When children have experienced frustrations with each other, staff acknowledge and explore their feelings and provide suggestions for how this can be resolved. As a result, the children have become more settled in the home.

The home is clean, comfortable, and well maintained. All of the children's bedrooms are personalised to the children's choice, and their artwork is displayed on the walls. Everyone eats their main meal together in the dining area, which contributes to the family feel of the home. Children benefit from areas to socialise in, which include a 'chill out room,' a spacious back garden and a games room.

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

Children have positive relationships with staff in the home. One child said there is a member of staff who they go to with their worries and described how that person made their family very welcome during their first visit in the home.

Children have detailed risk assessments. These enable staff to have a good understanding of individual risks and the actions to take when there are concerns.

Staff manage incidents well. Bedroom searches are undertaken when there is a cause for concern, and items are removed when necessary. Staff understand and follow safeguarding procedures and work in partnership with local authorities and the police. Despite this good practice, the registered manager does not always notify Ofsted about safeguarding incidents as required.

Children's key-work sessions address their safety and well-being. They focus on concerns including children going missing from care and substance misuse and explore how these can be addressed. This enables children to learn more about the associated risks and supports them to make positive choices.

Staff follow the missing-from-care protocol when children are missing from the home. They understand the reasons why this may happen and work with children to reduce the risk. However, written records of missing episodes lack detail, and feedback from return home interviews is not always obtained.

Allegations against staff are managed well. Children's concerns are listened to, the local authority designated officer is consulted, and investigations take place as required. Children receive a formal response to their concerns and are assured that leaders and managers take allegations of harm seriously.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and newly recruited deputy manager are suitably experienced and have the relevant qualifications. The registered manager is well supported by an experienced responsible individual. This has helped the registered manager to focus on establishing a team of experienced workers.

The registered manager has employed a team of permanent staff, and the use of agency staff is low. The necessary checks are undertaken to ensure that there is safe recruitment in place. Leaders and managers demonstrate that they value the team's work and staff morale is good. The team is stable, and staff support each other. This means that the children experience continuity in their care and have the opportunity to develop trusted relationships with staff.

All staff participate in a comprehensive induction programme. They complete mandatory training courses to meet the children's needs and have further training in the home's chosen therapeutic model of care. The training helps staff to understand

children's needs and risks and how to support them effectively. Staff training and development are discussed in team meetings, and a learning culture is developing within the team.

Regular staff supervision takes place. Supervision is reflective and addresses topics including staff well-being, team dynamics and feedback on training. Staff find their supervision helpful, and this contributes to the team's resilience.

Communication within the staff team is effective. There are regular team meetings which include detailed updates about the children, the daily running of the home and reflective discussions. Staff handovers between shifts are well documented, and staff sign to confirm they have participated in the handover. This ensures that key information is shared and provides the registered manager with oversight of this taking place.

The registered manager has not routinely escalated concerns to the local authority when there is a shortfall in providing important information about children to the home. This means that key information about children's education is not always available to the staff working with them.

The registered manager is responsive to feedback from external agencies. For example, a social worker advised that communication with a parent was not managed as well as it could be. This was taken on board and changes were put into place which improved the situation.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about their care plans to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should notify Ofsted if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that records are kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 46, paragraph 9.31)

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: 2769759

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Silver Birch Care (Residential Services) Limited

Registered provider address: SBCH House, 212 Ballards Lane, London N3 2LX

Responsible individual: Craig Wallace

Registered manager: Mandy Ohenhen

Inspectors

Jo Mitchell, Social Care Inspector

Amanda Burrows, Social Care Inspector

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