

Paramount Foster Care

SMA House, 172 Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, B70 6QG

Assurance visit

Information about this independent fostering agency

Paramount foster care is a small Independent Fostering Agency in the West Midlands of England that was registered in October 2019.

Visit dates: 1 to 2 December 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

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 have trusted and secure relationships with their foster carers. This continues even when children move on for unexpected reasons. Children take part in a broad range of indoor and outdoor activities despite the restrictions in place due to COVID-19.

Children are supported to keep in touch with their family, friends and other people who are important to them. Foster carers and their supervising social workers have managed this particularly well during the pandemic with many face-to-face visits being maintained and supported.

The agency uses creative ways to help children express their feelings and share their views. Foster carers also advocate effectively for unaccompanied children who are seeking asylum.

Carers have successfully kept children in school wherever possible and supported learning from home when necessary. All the children are back in school apart from those that are currently self-isolating.

The safety of children

Risks are identified, understood and managed effectively from the point where children are matched with foster carers.

Supervising social workers and specialist therapists develop strategies to help protect children that are both practical and sensitive to children's past trauma. There have been no safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations made since the agency was registered with Ofsted which is further evidence that risks are being identified and managed well.

Carers are well prepared and supported to respond appropriately to children who may go missing or may be at risk of harm.

Children have firm and clear boundaries in place that give them a sense of stability and security. Carers are supported to manage challenging situations and behaviours effectively.

As a relatively new agency with several new carers there is a need to provide some carers with lots of help and guidance. When needed, the support given to carers is well-considered and timely.

Leaders and managers

Managers and staff place the well-being of individual children at the centre of their practice. The staff team share similar values and work well together to provide consistency for children including being available outside of normal office hours.

Plans for children are reviewed effectively and meet their individual needs. The plans as Covid-19 restrictions are eased are coherent and effective. Placement plans are in place for children, they contain good practical guidance for carers and are reviewed regularly. There are some delays in getting local authority care plans, but managers escalate this appropriately.

Leaders and managers actively use the findings from internal monitoring to improve the experiences of children including surveys and direct work with children and foster carers.

The fostering panel promotes safe, secure and stable placements. The first annual review for new foster carers is completed at the eight- or nine-months stage. This allows for early consideration of any additional challenges for the foster carers because of the pandemic.

Foster carers receive strong, individualised support, including effective training. While training is largely online due to current circumstances, this is enhanced with regular supervision and discussion. Training addresses the specific needs of children including their sexuality and identity as well as how to stay safe online.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: 2509967

Registered provider: Paramount Foster Care

Responsible individual: Amjid Zaman

Registered manager: Farzana Asghar

Inspector(s)

Steve Lowe, Social Care Inspector

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