

1249034

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for one child who has lived through adverse childhood experiences.

Since the last inspection, a new manager has come to manage the home. They have been in post since September 2023. The manager has the relevant experience and qualifications for the role. They are in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 December 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 10 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/01/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good
17/07/2019	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The same child has lived at the home since the last full inspection. This stability enables the child to continue to make good progress in all areas from their starting points.

The child is well supported by a core team of staff who know them very well. The staff team is nurturing in its approach and there are warm and good-humoured interactions between staff and the child. Staff build relationships with the child by supporting their interests such as growing vegetables and going swimming. Creating opportunities to spend time with the child enables meaningful relationships between the child and staff to develop.

The home is a homely place for the child to spend time. There are photographs of the child in communal areas and evidence of the child's interests around the home. The child's bedroom is decorated to their taste and is a place they can spend time and take pride in. The child's social worker said, 'When you walk in the door, you can tell this is (name of child's) home.'

Managers and staff work with health professionals, including mental health professionals, to ensure the child's physical and emotional health needs are understood and supported well. Additionally, staff use resources to educate the child about their developing emotional and physical health needs.

Staff support the child to achieve excellent attendance at school. Managers and staff carefully monitor the child's responses to education to ensure their academic needs are met, and the child continues to progress at school. Teachers say that managers and staff keep them updated, and that communication from staff is good.

Staff consult with the child effectively because they enable the child to communicate in their preferred way. For example, staff use visual cues with the child to enable them to make informed choices about all aspects of their care. This child-centred practice has a positive effect on the child's confidence and self-esteem. However, despite this positive practice, managers and staff have not ensured that the children's guide is written in a way that is accessible to the child.

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

The child's lived experiences and the impact on their behaviour is well understood by the staff team. Clear boundaries and routines, developed with the child, contributes to a sense of security for the child. Staff also engage in regular discussions, using resources, to help the child to identify their emotions. As a result, use of restrictive practices has significantly reduced because the child is better able to identify their emotions and manage their behaviour.

Managers ensure there are a range of risk assessments which guide staff to use therapeutic approaches to manage the child's complex behaviours. However, some of the information in risk assessments does not relate to current agreed practice. Additionally, staff are not guided about restraint practice. This risks inconsistent staff practice when managing the child's behaviour and is confusing for staff and the child.

Staff engage the child with a range of topics to help them identify risks. This positive work enhances the child's knowledge of risk and allows them to keep themselves increasingly safe. Additionally, there are measures to ensure the child is kept safe online.

When children make allegations, managers ensure independent oversight of staff practice by consulting with social workers and the local authority designated officer. Where appropriate, managers ensure that thorough investigations take place.

Managers and staff carry out a range of health and safety checks including regular fire drills. However, the fire risk assessment has not been carried out by a competent person; therefore, managers cannot be assured the home is compliant with fire safety regulations. This could potentially place the child and staff at risk of harm in an emergency.

The manager regularly reviews the risks presented by the local area and consults with the local police. The manager, therefore, has a detailed understanding of potential risks to the child when they are accessing the local community and has strategies to reduce risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager is experienced and knowledgeable. Despite being in post for only three months, before this inspection, they have worked on improving care for the child. The child's social worker has noted the positive impact that a change of manager and the introduction of a more therapeutic approach has had on the child's behaviour.

Managers have a range of monitoring systems to monitor the quality of care for the child and to plan improvements. This includes a quality-of-care review submitted every six months. However, monthly reports by the independent person do not contain the views of families or professionals. Furthermore, the independent person does not seek the views of the child. This means that independent feedback to further develop the service and improve the quality of care is overlooked.

Managers ensure that the child receives consistent care from a team of qualified staff. Four staff have achieved the required qualification and two are enrolled. Any shortfalls in staffing are covered by existing staff and staff from other homes who are known to the child. This consistent care means that the child can develop relationships with adults who know them well.

Staff say that the manager is approachable and supportive, and that morale is good. The manager ensures that staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. New staff receive a well-planned induction and a six-month probation review. There is also a comprehensive training programme for all staff. Regular team meetings, supervision and appraisals take place. Staff are, therefore, well supported and have the skills and knowledge to provide good care for the child.

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, The 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring the person completing the fire risk assessment has the correct certification and competence.	4 February 2024
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff receive consistent guidance to manage all the child's risks. Additionally, that staff receive consistent guidance regarding restraint practice, which is only to be used in line with the child's most up-to-date risk assessment and with agreement from the local authority.	4 February 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should produce a children's guide that is age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and is explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- The registered person should actively support the independent visitor to seek regular independent feedback from families and professionals and use the feedback to develop the service. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

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: 1249034

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Searchlight Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Marcus House, Parkhall Road, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5XA

Responsible individual: Paul Turner

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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