

1250253

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and is registered for up to four children, and provides care and accommodation for short breaks only for children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 June 2017

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection:

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practice and are able to identify and respond effectively to any safeguarding concerns.

- Children enjoy positive relationships with members of staff who know them well.
- Staff ensure that children's healthcare needs are effectively addressed.
- Staff encourage children to achieve and support their educational attainment.
- Children make good progress.
- The homes 'sensory den' is amazing.
- Some children have had short breaks for many years.
- Parents said the staff are really helpful and keep them informed.
- External professionals say the home is a very positive service.

The children's home's areas for development:

- All relevant checks have not been completed prior to a candidate commencing employment.
- Children have not been supported to express themselves as individuals, and they are unable to practise their traditions and their cultural and religious beliefs.
- The home's philosophy in relation to paid activities are not met.
- Training in fire safety and prevention requires updating.
- The manager and staff do not receive supervision at regular intervals.
- The manager has not maintained a full and accurate record of a complaint received from a parent.
- The home environment is not child friendly or focused.
- There are identified weaknesses in relation to children's individual risk assessments.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the first inspection

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children and use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(ix)(c)(i))	31/07/2017
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interest skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(b))	31/07/2017
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25 (c))	31/07/2017
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of	31/07/2017

each matter in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(3)(d))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once a year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	31/07/2017
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	31/07/2017

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress, taking into account their starting points and how often they stay, across most aspects of their welfare and their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. The children benefit from a manager and staff team who care and promote their needs. Children benefit from support that contributes to change and improvement in their lives. A social worker for one of the children said, 'It's a very positive service with clear care plans which help the children to progress well from their starting points.'

Assessment weekends allow appropriate decision-making when assessing the suitability of a child before they come to stay at the home. When a child spends an assessment weekend at the home, they are also assessed for themed breaks, which include 'Harry Potter' weekends. Many of the children have had short breaks at the home for many years and have formed good, strong relationships with the staff. The staff spoke fondly of the children and expressed how much they cared for them. One staff member, who has recently moved to another provision, got quite emotional when telling the inspector how much she 'missed the children and the home.'

The home's philosophy, aims and objectives in the home's statement of purpose states that the home aims to provide the best range of engaging activities that promote new experiences and cultivate existing likes and interests. However, during the inspection

and through discussions with staff, it was apparent that some children were unable to access paid activities due staff being unprepared, there being a lack of choice, and a lack of funding from parents. For example, swimming was cancelled due to staff or children not having swimwear. On another occasion, a child had no money for an activity. After reviewing the activity planner and other documents, it was clear that paid activities are rare. However, there have been plenty of walks in the local community parks, and the home's 'sensory den' is extremely well resourced. It is colourful, bright and stands out from the rest of the home. It is a space for children to spend time playing and having fun, and equipment is in abundance.

The home is adequately decorated and furnished; however, the children's bedrooms lack warmth and colour. Bedrooms are clinical in their appearance and lack accessories, furniture and bedding. New mattresses have been purchased; however, these are too small for the bedframes and could be a potential hazard. The staff say that the children cannot see the television in the lounge as it is too small, which would also impact on those children who have visual impairments.

The children's care plans, which are called 'This book is about me', are very informative. They provide a clear pen picture of each child. Those children who stay at the home come straight from school. The communication books between the home, school and parents are robust. As a result, the teachers and parents have a good overview of what their child has been doing during their break. For example, the books describe what food the children have eaten, times out in the community, their general mood and any progress they have made. One parent said, 'He [the child] really likes it there, the staff are really helpful and they keep me fully informed of what he does when he stays there. It's been a godsend.' This promotes continuity of care from all care givers and supports educational attainment.

However, the needs of all children have not always been fully considered. A child's needs arising from race, culture, faith, religion and ethnicity have not been met. A child of Muslim faith, who has regular stays at the home, only receives vegetarian meals. Other children staying during the same period also only receive vegetarian meals. As a result, the children have not been supported to express themselves or to have a choice, and they are unable to practise their traditions and their cultural and religious beliefs. The manager and staff acknowledged that, as a result of this, the impact has not only been on the child, but other children staying at the home.

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

All of the members of staff spoken to have a good understanding of safeguarding practice. They are fully aware of their responsibility to protect children from abuse and they can confidently describe reporting procedures. The staff are fully aware of the roles of external agencies and report in confidence their organisation's whistle-blowing policy. This knowledge helps to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported and dealt with promptly. The safety of children is promoted.

Good staffing levels reduce the chances of bullying taking place. Bullying in the home is not an area of concern to the children. Boundaries are clear, coupled with consistent daily routines, and one-to-one supervision, all of which provide children with a level of

security that they are comfortable with. The children were observed throughout the inspection with a member of staff at all times.

Behaviour management is well handled. There have been no significant incidents, no allegations of abuse, or referrals to children's services. There have been no incidents of children going missing. However, local protocols are in place should a child go missing. There has been no need for physical intervention, and no sanctions have been used.

An assessment of the local area, and any potential hazards that it presents, is in place and regularly reviewed. Having a good knowledge of local risks to the children means that the staff can be vigilant about the risks, and work with the children to raise their awareness, both inside the home and out in the community.

There is a process and system in place for the safe administration and recording of medication, which is robust. The staff ensure that they have all relevant health information pertaining to each individual children's health needs, which are on file, up to date. There are grab packs available for the staff in a potential emergency.

There are some identified weaknesses in relation to children's individual risk assessments. No evidence could be found to clearly show that staff had read and understood the risk assessments held on children's files. The staff commented that they had read the assessments and a signature sheet should be clearly visible in the file to show this. However, this could not be evidenced.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has recently left the home to manage another provision for the service. Ofsted was promptly notified and informed of the contingency arrangements for a member of staff, who has over seven years' experience in the home, to step up into the manager's position. The manager is currently going through the registration process.

There is a training matrix in place, which includes a range of mandatory courses designed to enhance care workers' skills, including safeguarding and Makaton. However, training records evidenced that some of the training is out of date. Refresher courses have not taken place within the timescale. What is of concern is that the majority of staff are not adequately trained in fire prevention. The manager was unable to clarify future dates for when the training will be available. This approach to training does not ensure that the staff who support children have the knowledge and skills to do so in a safe manner.

When a complaint had been made by a parent raising concerns regarding the care and support offered to her daughter following a stay, the registered manager did not maintain a full and accurate record of the detail of concern. During the inspection, the manager did try and gather this information; however, the concerns raised could not be identified. Without clear records about complaints, it is unclear whether the issues have been addressed appropriately.

A new member of staff has been recruited since the home was registered in December 2016. Not all relevant checks had been completed before the candidate commenced work. For example, Disclosure and Barring Service and a reference from the previous

employer have not been received. Verification of references has not been evidenced. The manager is unaware of who this reference is from, and gaps in employment have not been challenged during or after the interview process. Currently, the member of staff is on training. However, this does not ensure that the selection and vetting process is not robust.

Staff do not receive supervision at regular intervals. The staff spoken to say they feel supported; however, they could not recall when they had last received supervision. Supervision files were reviewed. The manager had not received supervision since November 2016 and records for some staff also had large gaps. Staff had recently received a yearly appraisal; however, the manager had no appraisals held in her records and was unclear if and when she had received one.

The manager continues to review the quality of care provided to children. Additional monitoring is completed through a monthly visit from an independent visitor. This ensures that the service is monitored and any potential shortfalls identified.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1250253

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Achieving Aspirations Community Interest Company

Registered provider address: Achieving Aspirations Community Interests Company, Suffolk House, 7 Hydra Orion Court, Addison Way, Great Blakenham, Ipswich IP6 0LW

Responsible individual: Anna Boulton

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Cathy Russell, social care inspector

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