

1257740

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have social and/or emotional difficulties. Some of the children and young people may have an autism spectrum disorder. The home is operated by a private company.

The current manager was appointed in September 2019 and registered in May 2020. The manager has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management in the children's workforce.

Visit dates: 28 to 29 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 29 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: 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

Three children live in the home. Two of the children have lived there for over two years and a third child has lived there for over a year. This means that children know staff well and have good relationships with them.

Staff use their relationships with children to talk about difficult issues and to give advice and help when needed. For example, staff use planned meetings and day-to-day discussions, to support children to manage difficult emotions. This support from staff helps to promote children's emotional and social development.

Recently, staff have talked with children about discrimination and prejudice. These discussions have helped children to develop a greater understanding of what is happening in the wider community. This contributes to children's growing understanding of how their actions can affect others.

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, staff have worked hard to keep children occupied and prevent boredom. This means that children have continued to be able to enjoy a range of activities both in the home and the wider community.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have continued to promote children's learning and education. In some cases, this has been achieved by staff working creatively. For example, one child designed and built a chicken run with staff. The child has gained practical skills and knowledge through this task.

Children make progress as staff give them opportunities to try new things. For example, one young person is having driving lessons. Learning to drive will promote the young person's independence, confidence and sense of identity.

Much of the home is homely and well presented. Despite this, two bedrooms were found to need repair and decoration. For example, one bedroom had damp around the window. Another bedroom had a broken wardrobe, and there was a blinds cord dangling which had the potential to pose a hazard. Managers took steps to address these shortfalls during the inspection.

The safety of children

Prior to the inspection, the manager had found that in some cases, staff are inconsistent in how they manage children's behaviours. The manager is working with staff to improve this. Despite this, in most cases, staff are successful at

promoting children's behaviours. For example, staff reward children's positive behaviours with incentives that are age appropriate and relevant to children's interests. Furthermore, staff are quick to praise children when they have a good day.

Staff use their skills and knowledge of children to successfully manage and de-escalate children's sometimes challenging behaviours. This means that children do not go missing from care and the use of physical interventions is low.

On the rare occasions that staff do physically restrain children, the records of these incidents are of variable quality. This is a potential missed opportunity to learn from such incidents and improve staff practice.

In other aspects, monitoring by leaders and managers is increasingly offering the required scrutiny of safeguarding practices. For example, regular auditing by managers ensures that staff follow approved procedures, including administering medication safely.

Linked to this, staff have recently completed training in relation to the safe administration of medication. This contributes to staff's understanding and ability to meet children's medical and health needs.

When there is a concern about staff practice, or when children complain about a staff member, managers carry out thorough investigations. This includes ensuring that children are happy with the outcome. This means that children feel that staff listen to them and take their concerns seriously.

The manager does not always inform Ofsted of notifiable incidents. For example, concerns relating to one member of staff's conduct, which resulted in their dismissal, were not shared with Ofsted. However, the actions taken by managers to investigate this matter were appropriate.

When recruiting new staff, managers undertake thorough interviews and ensure that checks such as obtaining references are completed. Despite this, managers do not always identify and consider gaps in new staff's employment histories. In response to this issue being identified during the inspection, immediate remedial action was taken, including arranging refresher training for managers involved in the recruitment of staff.

Leaders and managers

The leadership of the home has recently been enhanced through the appointment of new senior managers. The benefits of this have yet to fully materialise. As such, while the quality of care provided to children is improving, there are some ongoing areas of improvement.

The registered manager's understanding of the home's strengths and areas of development is greatly enhanced by the quality and detail of audits undertaken by the independent visitor. This has contributed to the manager's timely completion of the six-monthly quality of care review. However, in completing the review, the registered manager did not utilise feedback from young people, their families and placing authorities. This potentially detracts from the usefulness of this review process.

However, feedback obtained by inspectors during the inspection was very positive. For example, children's social workers informed inspectors that they are pleased with the care that their children receive. Furthermore, social workers told inspectors that their children are making significant progress.

Managers and staff understand the importance of working with partner agencies. Good communication with other agencies ensures that there is a joined-up approach to meeting the needs of children.

The majority of staff have yet to obtain the required qualification. However, managers have ensured that staff are enrolled to complete this qualification. Furthermore, staff are given a financial incentive to complete this qualification as swiftly as possible. This demonstrates that managers are taking decisive action to ensure that staff obtain the required qualifications to undertake their roles.

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 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 premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(d))	14/11/2020

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; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the 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 each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(d))	14/11/2020
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii))	14/11/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	14/11/2020
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months.	14/11/2020

In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c))	
--	--

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1257740

Registered provider: Orchard Children Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 118 Calais Road, Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 0UW

Responsible individual: Imran Khan

Registered manager: Tanya Butler

Inspectors

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector
James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020