

1269421

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned.

It is registered to provide care for three children who may have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 March 2025

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

Date of last inspection: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
13/03/2023	Full	Good
04/01/2022	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live in a home that is warm and inviting. Children like their bedrooms; these are spacious and reflect their interests. There are plans in place for children to be able to further personalise their bedrooms through redecoration. Children share that they like living at the home, children can identify staff that they trust and to whom they can go with their concerns. As a result, children have settled well at the home.

Children are supported to see people who are important to them. One child has recently been supported to reconnect with their previous carers. Staff ensure that they work with families in a flexible way, recognising that children value the time they spend with loved ones. One parent spoken to shared that staff 'went the extra mile to ensure that family time went ahead'.

Children have varied opportunities socially and staff ensure that children are able to engage regularly in activities in the community. Children enjoy being able to access another children's home run by the provider. Here they enjoy spending time with other peers and using the extensive facilities, including a small farm.

Children are making personalised progress in their education. For one child this means engagement in a school setting for the first time in several years and for another increased engagement with learning via a tutor. One child has recently stopped accessing a local college but has been supported to secure work that they are enjoying. This encourages children to remain in good routines during the week.

Children have regular one-to-one discussions with staff. Staff help children to understand potential risks, such as the risk posed to them online. Staff persevere with children even when their engagement may be minimal. Recordings are clear when the discussion is informed by an incident or an area of identified vulnerability for the child. This provides helpful context for those accessing the record in the future. However, some recordings would benefit from greater detail and clarity around the discussions held.

Children have a voice in the home. The manager has established several formats by which children can share their wishes and feelings, including through regular children's meetings and a 'grumbles book'. Staff work hard to action children's requests where possible, and children are therefore assured that they can influence the care that they receive in the home.

Care plans for children are robust and detailed. They allow for staff reflection on the aims of care and children's progress as a result. Plans would be further strengthened by exploring how children's unique identities are understood and supported by staff.

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

Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are clear and detailed. They help staff to understand potential triggers for children and how to respond effectively to them when they become upset. Risk assessments also include important historical information about recent incidents. This supports staff to understand strategies that have or haven't helped children to feel calm.

When children make complaints or allegations, these are taken seriously by the manager and appropriate actions are taken to address staff practice that could be harmful for children. Appropriate systems have been developed to help children to share their feelings or concerns, even when they may not wish to make an official complaint. This assures children that staff value their views and are willing to make adaptations to practice where this is appropriate.

There has been improved practice with regards to sanctions within the home. There is clear management oversight and challenge when a sanction given is felt to be inappropriate or disproportionate. Children have been given the space to talk about sanctions and make suggestions via the development of a 'let's talk book'. The manager ensures that children understand why a sanction has been given and that this is not intended as a punishment for behaviour.

Children are well supported to access appropriate professional input to holistically meet their needs. One child is being well encouraged by staff to engage in medical interventions to manage a complex health condition. Good communication and advocacy by staff, particularly with specialist child mental health services, is ensuring that children have several opportunities outside of the home to discuss their feelings and experiences.

Staff try their best to help children to be calm during behavioural incidents by using distraction and 'change of face' techniques. Where physical interventions have been utilised, children and staff are given time following the incident to reflect, and children are offered medical support. Recordings are generally thorough, but there was one occasion when a hold utilised had not been clearly recorded, and this made it difficult to ascertain its appropriateness.

Children are now better able to regulate their emotions, and this is reducing the number of incidents that require a physical intervention to keep the child safe. However, this reduction has not yet been sustained for a significant period.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is run by a dynamic, experienced and committed manager. He has nurtured a team of deputies and senior staff, who work excellently together to oversee and monitor children's progress in the home. They understand their areas of oversight and the importance of regular monitoring being fed back to the manager. This ensures crucial information is understood by the manager and highlights areas in need of improvement.

Staff are extremely positive about working at the home. They care deeply about the children and feel inspired by the manager. They look to him to model excellent practice, and consequently, they understand what is needed of them. One staff member shared, 'The registered manager looks after his staff and always makes sure that they have a good work–life balance. Nothing is too much for him to help the children and staff out at the home.; He ensures that everyone is looked after.'

The manager has developed trusting relationships with wider professionals involved with the children. He is confident to advocate for children in his care and is willing to challenge professionals where appropriate. On several occasions, this has meant that decisive action has been taken by the manager to keep children safe at the home. Professionals spoken to were very positive about the care offered by staff. They feel that children are well supported when they first move to the home and that staff communicate effectively with them.

Staff support systems are excellent. Staff can access comprehensive training, including specialist training, to be able to understand the unique care offered to children. Staff feel this prepares them well for their role. Staff engage in regular team meetings and supervisions, but also feel the manager is available to them whenever they need advice or support. Consequently, staff retention is good, and children therefore experience consistency in those caring for them.

The manager is encouraging of staff to develop innovative ways to capture the voice of the child. This has led to a recent development of an 'in house' podcast, where children can speak about topics important to them. While this is not yet embedded into practice, it is something that several children have enjoyed being a part of. It is important to the manager that children's voices are clearly heard in the home and that they understand the actions that staff will take in response.

There have been significant gaps in the support offered to the manager from the responsible individual. A lack of supervision over several months has meant he has not been offered the appropriate space to learn, reflect and feel supported. While the impact of this appears minimal, it is important that the newly appointed responsible individual takes steps to address this moving forward.

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

Recommendations

- The importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life-story work or other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered provider must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- 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 no-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 1269421

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Daniel Grant

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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