

1269565

Registered provider: Q Plus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a specialist school providing residential care and a short-break service. The home can provide care for up to four children with autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities and associated social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 27 May 2020. The deputy manager was appointed as the new interim manager in October 2022 and is applying to register with Ofsted.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home, with one child staying on a short break.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2021	Full	Good
05/12/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/08/2019	Full	Good
11/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff genuinely care about the children and take pride in their achievements. This positive affirmation encourages children, those in residential or receiving short breaks, to learn essential life skills to enable them to become more independent. For example, some children have learned how to comb their own hair, tidy up after themselves and greet people appropriately.

Staff offer children an appropriate level of affection and praise. This helps children to develop positive relationships with the staff.

Staff are skilled in using social stories and the Picture Exchange Communication System to help children to express their wishes and feelings.

Children benefit from attending the on-site school. Staff are familiar with children's educational needs and their progress and keep teaching staff well informed of any necessary information to assist in supporting the children in school time.

Staff work closely with health professionals to ensure that children have access to the right support and advice in relation to their physical and emotional health.

When two children were asked to name the best things that have happened in the last year, they said having fun, relationships and schoolwork.

Staff ensure that children who stay for short breaks also benefit from individualised care. For example, staff made sure that one child who was due to arrive for a short stay had their favourite cartoon character bedding.

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

Children are able to indicate that they feel safe and can identify at least one adult they could approach if they were worried or had a problem.

Staff are adept at noticing changes in children's presentation and behaviour. They recognise that those changes may indicate that a child is struggling and needs additional support.

The level of detail in children's behaviour support plans is exemplary. Each plan provides a variety of simple actions that staff can apply to pre-empt certain behaviours or to distract children. For example, when a child's transport was running late, staff quickly picked up on the child's anxieties and used a tablet computer to help the child stay calm.

As a result of the staff implementing bespoke plans, consequences and physical interventions are rarely used. When staff need to use any measure of control, managers ensure that these measures are applied fairly and effectively.

Managers and staff promote a way of working with children, which is also used in the school, to help them to better understand the importance of personal space and safety. Staff regularly revisit work with the children on the key principles of how to communicate their emotions if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe in social situations.

Staff support this approach with well-written safety plans that cover a range of activities and settings, such as showering, being with others in the home's communal areas or travelling on a bus. These plans outline the number of staff that are needed to ensure that children's safety is not compromised.

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

There has been a period of instability in the management team, especially in securing a registered manager. Senior managers are motivated to establish consistent management arrangements in the home and to ensure that children's care continues to make a positive difference to their lives.

There have been improvements in securing a permanent staff team, which has led to a reduction in the use of agency staff. However, some new staff inductions have not been completed or signed off by a manager.

Managers, team leaders and senior staff have recently received supervision training and staff are receiving regular supervision from their respective line managers. However, supervision records do not always identify any actions resulting from the supervision, including the timescales.

As a result of the recent recruitment drive, many of the staff are new and have not yet formed a cohesive team. One member of staff expressed frustration that some tasks are not being carried out by all members of staff. Another member of staff said that some new staff do not have the necessary skills to address the vulnerabilities and complex needs of the children. Leaders and managers have acknowledged that changes in the staff team have created some gaps in staff skills and knowledge and have responded by securing additional training.

Managers and staff focus a lot of time and effort on recording and monitoring children to better understand how to meet their needs and keep them safe. However, there are currently no effective systems in place for showing how the quality of care provided to children is making a difference.

Leaders and managers do not yet have effective auditing processes in place. Not all children using the short-breaks service receive regular key-working sessions and these sessions are not always recorded promptly. Consequently, children staying for

short breaks do not have the same opportunities to express their views as other children.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and that the manager can monitor practice effectively.	31 January 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;	31 January 2023

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(iii))	31 January 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that inductions for staff are completed and signed off by an appropriate manager. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff supervision records identify any actions, who will be completing those actions and the timescales for completion. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all children accessing the short-break service have regular key-work sessions and that these are recorded promptly. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

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: 1269565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: 1 Askham Road, Shepherds Bush, London W12
0NW

Responsible individual: Freddie Adu

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

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