

1277380

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It offers care for up to five children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities.

Three children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

There has been no registered manager in post since June 2023. The current manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

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: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/11/2021	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are encouraged to build positive and trusting relationships with the staff. The staff enjoy spending time with the children. They understand that through doing this, they get to know the children, their likes, dislikes and changing needs. This helps the staff to adapt the care they provide to the children in a responsive way. During the inspection, warm, caring and supportive relationships were observed between the staff and the children.

The children living in the home are making good progress from their starting points. Feedback from external professionals and one child's parent is overwhelmingly positive with respect to the care the children receive from staff and how this is helping the children to do well. One professional stated that the progress [name of child] is making is 'remarkable' and that [name of child] is making progress with their communication and independent living skills. The parent of one child said that the child's family members have noticed how well [name of child] looks and how [name of child] is becoming more independent.

The staff help the children to be healthy by supporting them to attend routine and specialist appointments. When there are emerging concerns about a child's physical or emotional health, action is taken in a timely manner to get appropriate support for the child from external professionals.

The staff support children with their education. This has helped the children to make progress with their learning. For one child, this has supported them to complete their exams. One professional said that the child would not have been in the position to sit their exams without the support from the staff team.

The staff regularly seek the views, wishes and feelings of the children living in the home through informal and focused conversations and regular children's meetings. Consultation between the children and staff is meaningful and has resulted in the staff supporting one child with their emotional health. It has enabled another child to make college applications and has resulted in new items being purchased for the home.

The children's plans are progressive and goal-orientated. This helps the children to see the progress they are making and celebrate their achievements. Children's case records are up to date and reflect their day-to-day experiences. However, in some instances, case records and plans contain some slight inaccuracies. While this has had no impact on children's progress, it does not help the children to fully understand their experiences while living in the home.

The staff capture memories for the children in memory books. The books are well presented and relay the children's special times with their family members, the children's achievements and the activities they have taken part in while living in the home.

However, not all the photos have an accompanying narrative. This shortfall does not help children to fully understand their time in the home.

The home is spacious, inviting, clean and in good repair. The children have personalised their bedrooms and have contributed their ideas for the decor of the home. The manager and the staff have plans to enhance the home environment to make it feel even more like a family home for children.

The home's location risk assessment is robust and has been formulated in consultation with external professionals. This supports placing authorities, parents and staff to understand the risks in the local community and how the children in the home will be safeguarded from such risks.

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

Professionals and family members have confidence in the staff team's ability to help and protect the children living in the home. The staff have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. The staff spend time with the children and have conversations with them which are appropriate to the children's needs and vulnerabilities and help them to become increasingly safe. Such conversations have helped one child to safely administer their own medication and have helped another child to attend a local community group without the need for staff supervision.

Children rarely go missing from the home. On the two occasions when children have gone missing, the staff acted quickly and searched for them. The staff also worked closely with the children's family members, the police and the placing authorities to ensure the quick and safe return of the children back to the home. Once safely home, the staff spoke with the children to understand why they went missing and explored with the children what the staff needed to do to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.

The children's behaviour plans are regularly reviewed and updated. The plans help to support the staff to understand how to promote a positive environment for the children in the home and while out in the community. This has resulted in a reduction in the need for staff to hold children to keep them safe. Where children are held, this is done as a last resort to keep the child and others safe. Following an incident, the staff and the child involved are offered debriefs. This helps to promote learning for the staff and the child, while supporting the repairing of relationships and the welfare of the child. Leaders and managers have good oversight of such incidents and use a tracker to enable them to identify trends.

The children's individual risk assessments are detailed, up to date and easy to understand. However, in the case of two children, a known risk has not been considered. Although this shortfall has not negatively impacted on either child, it means that the staff do not have all the necessary information available to them when providing care for the children.

Children living in the home know how to make a complaint. Furthermore, the children can register a complaint, worry or dissatisfaction in several ways. This means that all the children living in the home can make their views known irrespective of their ability or preferred way of communicating.

Since the last inspection, safer recruitment processes have been strengthened. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has been without a registered manager for a significant period. Following the last inspection, interim management arrangements were put in place. This has brought about positive changes to the care provided to the children living in the home and has promoted stability in the staff team. A permanent manager has been appointed and has applied to register with Ofsted.

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager. The manager and the deputy manager know the children well and are ambitious about what each child can achieve. They recognise the progress the children are making and act where required to ensure that the children's needs are understood and met.

One professional spoke about the lengths the manager went to in working with an external agency to assess the needs of one of the children living in the home. This resulted in the child receiving a formal diagnosis, which has helped the child, staff and professionals to better understand the child's needs and tailor the child's care plans and care accordingly.

Staff enjoy working in the home. They described a 'settled' and 'child-orientated' home environment where they work together to meet children's individual needs. The staff feel supported by leaders and managers and have confidence in them.

The manager has high expectations of herself and her staff team. She provides support and challenge to the staff through regular practice-based supervision, training and team meetings. However, one member of staff has not received the required training. Although this has had no impact on the children living in the home and the manager is actively addressing this, leaders and managers must ensure that the staff are suitably qualified.

Leaders and managers regularly review the home's statement of purpose and send it to the regulator in a timely way. However, the current statement of purpose contains some inaccuracies. This shortfall prevents transparency to placing authorities. The manager addressed this during the inspection and has amended the statement of purpose accordingly.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the children's individual risk assessments contain all known risks.	8 July 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's records about each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and ability. Life-story materials should include information which will help children to understand their time in the home, and case records should be accurate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff in a care role, including external agency and bank staff, have attained the qualification in regulation 32 (4) within the relevant time frame listed in regulation 32 (5). ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: 1277380

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ROC Northwest

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Jeanette Swift

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Shirin Khan, Social Care Inspector

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