

1278806

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties.

There is a suitably qualified registered manager in post.

Inspection date: 9 January 2024

Date of last inspection: 27 June 2023

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home. One child has lived in the home for over four years and is preparing to move from the home. Since the last inspection, three children have moved in and two children have moved on from the home.

The home is clean and has undergone extensive redecoration. All the communal areas and children's bedrooms have been decorated. However, some areas are still looking tired and worn. For example, there are stains on carpets and a lightshade and bathroom cabinet door were missing. This detracts from the homely feeling.

Children benefit from nurturing relationships with staff. One child said they get on well with staff and their peers and had someone they could talk to if they had any worries or concerns. Staff also stay in touch with children who have moved on from the home. This is testament to the trusting and enduring relationships staff form with children.

Staff promote children's health. Staff ensure that children are supported to attend all routine health appointments and seek specialist mental health support for children when required.

The support that staff provide for children's education is variable. While staff work closely with education professionals to find suitable placements for children, they do not consistently ensure that children engage in educational activities while a place is being sought. This lack of structure and routine does not support children to progress educationally.

There continue to be shortfalls in the manager's approach to care planning. When considering admitting new children into the home, the manager has failed to thoroughly consider children's individual risks and the impact that these may have on children already living in the home. This omission can lead to poor placement decisions, affecting the atmosphere of the home and the children's experiences.

Overall, safeguarding is effective. Staff know children well and know their needs, risks and the actions they need to take to mitigate risk. However, children's individual placement plans and risk assessments do not always contain all known risks. This means that staff may not have all the information they need to keep children safe and can lead to inconsistencies in care.

Staff manage incidents of children going missing from care well. They follow clear missing-from-care protocols, searching for children and consulting with police to quickly locate children. When risks escalate, staff quickly report concerns and work

with external professionals to identify strategies to help to keep children safer. As a result, incidents are reducing.

The registered manager has not been in the home since June 2023. The deputy manager continues to manage the home in her absence. However, the absence of the registered manager means that there are no clear lines of management accountability. This can impact on the progress of children and their day-to-day experiences in the home. In addition, the provider has not kept Ofsted fully informed of the arrangements for the management of the home within the timescales stipulated in regulation.

Despite these shortfalls, the deputy manager has made improvements in her management oversight of the home. She has been creative in her ideas for upskilling staff and has worked closely with the independent visitor to improve the quality of care given to children. She has also ensured that there has been reflection with staff on children's placements. This supports staff learning and aims to prevent placement breakdowns in the future.

There is now a full staff team in place, which has improved the consistency of the care children are receiving.

Staff say they feel well supported by the deputy manager. They receive regular practice-related supervision. Team meetings are reflective and support the team to work together and improve practice. In addition, staff receive child-specific training, which ensures staff have the knowledge and skills to meet children's needs.

Feedback from external professionals was positive. They say that communication is good and staff keep children safe. Social workers are particularly complimentary of the staff's support for children to develop their independence skills.

Leaders and managers have worked hard to address the requirements and recommendations raised at the previous inspection. Four of the six requirements and one recommendation raised have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/11/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
15/01/2020	Full	Good

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) In particular, when considering admitting new children, managers must ensure that they have fully assessed all the child's needs and considered the impact that the child will have on the existing children living in the home. This requirement has been restated.	5 March 2024
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)) In particular, managers must ensure that children's risk assessments contain information on all known risks, providing clear guidance to staff on the actions they should take to mitigate risk. This requirement has been restated.	5 March 2024
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.	5 March 2024

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii)) In particular, managers must ensure that when children are not in school, there are clear structures and routines in place, including educational activities to support children’s learning.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(a)) This relates to the provider ensuring that, in the absence of the registered manager, the day-to-day arrangements for the management of the home, including lines of accountability, are clear.	5 March 2024
If the person who is in day-to-day charge of the children’s home proposes to be absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI of the proposed absence. Except in the case of an emergency or unforeseen absence, a notice under paragraph (1) must—	5 March 2024

be given no later than one month before the proposed absence commences, or within such shorter period as may be agreed with HMCI; and

specify with respect to the proposed absence—

its length or expected length;

the reason for it;

the arrangements which have been made for running the home during the absence;

the address, name and qualifications of the person who will be responsible for the home during the absence; and

in the case of the absence of the registered manager, the arrangements that have been, or are proposed to be, made for appointing another person to manage the home during the absence, including the proposed date by which the appointment is to be made.

If the absence arises as a result of an emergency or is unforeseen, the registered person must give notice of the absence—

within one week of the beginning of the absence; and

specifying the matters in paragraph (2) above.

If the notice required under paragraph (2) or (3) has not been given as required, it must be given without delay.

The registered person must notify HMCI of the return to duty of the person in day-to-day charge of the home not later than 7 days after the date of that person's return.

(Regulation 48 (1) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v) (3)(a)(b) (4) (5))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that the home is suitably furnished and maintained to a good standard. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1278806

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Registered provider address: Coventry City Council House, Earl Street, Coventry
CV1 5RR

Responsible individual: Angela Whitrick

Registered manager: Denise Flude

Inspectors

Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector
Charlotte Love, Social Care Inspector

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