

1278806

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who have social and emotional needs.

The manager has been registered since September 2018. The registered manager holds a level 5 award in the leadership and management of residential childcare.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

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

Date of last inspection: 12 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2019	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(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 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and 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)(i)(v)(d)) This is with specific reference to ensuring that the fire risk assessment is reviewed.	28/02/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) This is in relation to training to raise staff awareness of bullying and keeping children safe online.	28/02/2020

Recommendations

- Regulation 5 sets out overarching requirements that run across all of the Quality Standards. To meet the aspirations embodied in the Quality Standards, children's homes need to connect with and be part of the wider support system for each child in their care. No children's home will be able to meet, on its own, all of a child's needs. It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, but particularly the child's local authority and statutory social worker. The registered person and the staff of the home cannot force a relevant person to engage or work productively with them and the regulation does not require this. The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)

- Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- In addition to the requirements of this standard, the registered person has specific responsibilities under regulation 34 to prepare and implement policies setting out: arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect; clear procedures for referring child protection concerns to the placing authority or local authority where the home is situated if appropriate; and specific procedures to prevent children going missing and take action if they do. The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home, e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of his or her death. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, two children have continued to live at the home and two children have moved in. Planned visits prior to moving gave children the opportunity to learn about the home and meet the other children and staff.

Children are relaxed and comfortable with their carers. Children are involved in the plans for their care and benefit from individualised support that helps them to make progress. Committed staff give children a sense of stability which helps them to build positive bonds with staff whom they feel they can trust.

Thoughtful staff work hard to encourage children to broaden their interests. For one child, joining a wrestling club and taking part in a wrestling competition have helped his

confidence to flourish. Another child has achieved an award for swimming and is enjoying attending fire cadets. Pictures around the home show each of the children having fun on holidays and give the house a homely feel.

Staff work hard with other professionals to help children make educational progress. For example, a teacher described how one child is now thriving as a result of accessing the curriculum following a significant period out of school. Another teacher shared how the stability of the home has helped another child to become chattier, which is helping improve his language skills. One child has achieved a hair and beauty qualification. When children are not accessing education, staff work well with the child and relevant education professionals to identify suitable provision. For one child, this has involved the use of an advocate to help her express her views. However, a lack of structure to the day means that when children are out of school, opportunities are missed to help children to prepare for a return to education.

Staff encourage children to keep good health through eating a balanced diet and keeping active. Staff seek specialist support to help children improve their health as they require it. For one child, managers have sourced independent therapeutic services to help ensure that his emotional needs are met in a timely way. This support is helping him to better recognise and manage his feelings.

Involving children in their care is a strength of this home. Children are routinely consulted about their plans and their day-to-day care. Child-friendly versions of key documents help to remind children of the arrangements for their care. One child is proud to have been involved in a project with the Voices of Care Council. Children are encouraged to have a sense of social responsibility and have enjoyed being involved in a fundraising event for children in need.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff are aware of and follow through their responsibility to inform the police and other agencies when a child goes missing from the home. Positive relationships between the staff and children mean that when a child is missing contact is often maintained between the child and staff. Visits by an independent visitor ensure that children have the opportunity to talk to someone whom they feel comfortable with on their return. However, children's risk assessments lack specific detail about the action staff should take and when. A lack of clarity for staff about how they should respond when a child is missing means that practice is not always consistent.

The benefits and risks associated with using the internet are known by children, who are alert to how to keep themselves safe online. Agreements about internet use and staff checks of children's mobile devices increase children's safety. However, staff do not consistently risk-assess children's use of the internet as required by organisational policy. In addition, the policy is unclear about how parental controls can be used to enhance children's safety. Staff have access to online safety training. However, this does not inform staff about how to use parental controls on mobile devices to support children's

safety. These shortfalls could leave children at risk of accessing unsuitable content on their personal electronic devices.

There have been some incidents of bullying. Children told the inspector that they are happy with how staff respond when bullying has happened and that staff help them to understand the impact of their behaviour and to repair their relationships. This means that children feel happy and safe in the home. However, some staff have not had training to raise their awareness of bullying. This may leave staff with a variable understanding of how to spot and respond to bullying issues.

The home is generally well maintained and routine checks help to keep equipment in good order. The organisation has arrangements in place for the fire risk assessment to be undertaken by a competent independent person. However, despite managers pursuing the review of the fire risk assessment, this has not been completed within the specified timescales. This means that it is unclear whether any amendments are needed to the current measures to reduce the risk of or respond to fire. Following the inspection, a date for the review of the fire risk assessment has been confirmed.

Children say that they like living at the home and they feel safe. Children are clear about how to complain should they need to. There has been one complaint by children, which has been responded to satisfactorily.

Specific training and team development days have helped to equip staff with the knowledge to help them identify that a child is at risk of exploitation. The application of the signs of safety model in supervision and team meetings helps staff to reflect upon the worries they have for each child and how risks can be reduced. When a child is vulnerable to exploitation, staff work well with specialist agencies to help ensure that the risks are reduced through information-sharing and helping the child understand the risks posed to them.

Managers have an established working relationship with the designated officer, who is positive about how managers have responded when there has been a concern.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is calm and reflective. Her enabling approach helps staff to see beyond the challenges of their work and feel confident in their roles. This means that children benefit from staff who stick with them. A member of staff told the inspector, '(Manager's name) is fabulous. It's a privilege to have her as a manager. She has helped me grow and learn.'

The staff team is experienced and has remained stable. Staff who do not have a relevant qualification are enrolled on a suitable level 3 award and are due to complete within the required timescale. Induction activity for new staff continues to be comprehensive. Staff benefit from team events and individual and group supervision. A focus on each child helps staff to reflect on what needs to happen to reduce risk for children and to help them achieve their very best.

The registered manager has systems in place to monitor the ongoing operation of the home. This includes seeking children's views about what staff do well and what they could work on. Independent visits to the home are by a regular and dedicated visitor. The registered manager finds these helpful to the ongoing development of the service and responds to recommendations.

Managers have acted to ensure that the recruitment of staff is safe and the previous requirement relating to the recruitment of staff has been met.

The registered manager has continued to develop systems to review children's progress that are child-centred and include the child. This means that children feel involved in their care and have an understanding of their achievements and goals. However, staff do not always keep children's records up to date. For example, some direct work undertaken with children is not reflected in their records. This means that important information about a child's journey is not available to them or others.

Managers have established good relationships with a variety of partner agencies. This helps to support children's safety and progress. However, one social worker told the inspector that communication is not always consistent. In addition, managers had not followed up on the outcome of a concern that had been reported to a social worker. Inconsistencies in communication could mean that important information relevant to the care of children is lost.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1278806

Provision sub-type: children's home

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

Responsible individual: Angela Whitrick

Registered manager: Denise Flude

Inspector

Alison Cooper, social care inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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