

1278806

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Full 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 dates: 23 and 24 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 15 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Good
15/01/2020	Full	Good
12/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection. They have all lived in the home for over two years. No children have moved in to the home. One child has moved out of the home, into semi-supported accommodation, as the home felt that they were no longer able to meet the child's needs. The registered manager and deputy manager were absent for this inspection.

Children's experiences of living in this home are mixed. Staff are supporting some children to make progress and become safer. However, two of the children have not made progress since the last inspection. Their behaviours and risks have increased. There have been physical assaults to staff. This has resulted in one child having to move out of the home without notice. An alternative home is also being sought for another child, as staff feel that they are not able to meet their needs. This means that children do not have a positive experience of moving out of the home. They are not prepared for leaving both physically and emotionally.

The quality of relationships between children and staff varies. The inspector observed positive relationships between staff and children. However, one child told the inspector that they do not feel that staff are consistent in their approaches.

Children can, at times, have a negative influence on each other. There have been occasions when they have conspired together to go missing from the home or to behave negatively. Children have also encouraged each other to be aggressive towards staff. This causes other children that witness this to become anxious and feel unsafe. It also causes factions in children's relationships with each other. Staff have not completed any restorative work to repair relationships between children. This is a missed opportunity to teach children how to manage conflict and build positive relationships with others.

The communal areas of the home are nicely decorated and well furnished. However, there is damage to one of the children's bedrooms. This has occurred during incidents when the child's behaviour has been destructive. Staff have been unable to prevent them from pulling off a radiator and causing damage to the decoration on their bedroom walls. In addition, the children's main bathroom window did not have any blind or covering. This does not promote children's privacy and dignity, or provide children with a suitable, homely environment. The overseeing manager did ensure that a blind was in place before the end of the inspection.

Staff support children to attend education. Two of the children are in full-time education and both children told the inspector that they are enjoying their learning. Staff work well with education professionals to support children who are not in education. Children's life chances are improved because of their engagement in

education.

Staff support the children to maintain good physical and emotional health and well-being. Children access specialist services and receive support from medical professionals when required. This means that the children's health and well-being are promoted.

Staff support children to develop hobbies and interests and to enjoy a wide range of activities. These include going to church, music lessons and going on a summer holiday. Staff also support children to learn life skills, such as cooking, budgeting and independent travel. This enables children to have positive childhood experiences that will help them to live independently as adults.

Children's written plans are regularly reviewed. There are child-friendly plans in place, which staff review with children. Staff encourage children to attend and be involved in meetings about them. Children's views are frequently sought by staff and managers about their feelings and day-to-day experiences. This means that children can positively influence their day-to-day care.

Staff support children to spend time with their families and friends, when it is safe to do so. This ensures that children continue to build relationships and positive attachments with those people who are significant to them.

Social workers spoken to as part of this inspection gave positive feedback. They said that good progress had been made in some areas and that children had positive relationships with staff.

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

Staff are familiar with children's risks and understand what they should do to manage and mitigate those risks. When children go missing, staff follow their missing-from-home protocols. The risk of self-harm has reduced for one child. However, when children have displayed new behaviours, staff have not always taken appropriate action to keep children safe. For example, staff did not challenge a child who was using a lighter unsafely. Staff contacted the on-call manager before requesting that the child handover the lighter. This also does not provide assurances that staff always have the skills and confidence to keep children safe.

Allegations of harm are not consistently well managed and overseen. On one occasion, managers did not effectively investigate comments that a child made about staff. They did not share these concerns with the local authority designated officer or Ofsted, and records do not clearly show her decision-making. This is not in line with the organisation's safeguarding policies. Without these detailed records, it is not clear whether decisions and investigations are adequate.

Managers regularly review the use of physical intervention to ensure that it is used only as a last resort. The manager ensures that staff and children are always spoken

to following each physical intervention. This supports learning for the children and staff.

Staff's use of consequences is, at times, not in line with the organisation's ethos towards behaviour management. For example, on one occasion, staff gave a child a consequence of £100 for damage to property. Managers have not effectively reviewed this. They have failed to consider if the consequence is proportionate and effective.

Medication is generally managed well. Medication is safely stored, and records are maintained on the administration of medication. However, there has been one medication error. The manager did investigate the incident and made some changes to the administration process. However, there is no record of any reflection with staff to challenge their practice. This is a missed learning opportunity to develop staff's practice and improve the quality of care.

Safer recruitment practices are not consistently followed. While there are organisational checks in place, the manager does not provide effective oversight on these. Managers have, on one instance, failed to show professional curiosity, when there are discrepancies in one staff member's recruitment file.

Staff complete focused work with children to enable them to understand their risks and make more-informed choices to keep themselves safe. When this takes place, it supports children's welfare and well-being.

Staff provide a safe environment for children to live in. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure that the home is safe. Staff and children take part in regular fire drills to ensure that they know how to evacuate the home in the case of an emergency.

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

Monitoring systems are not effective. The systems in place have not identified the shortfalls in this inspection. This impedes managers' ability to improve children's experiences as their understanding of the day-to-day care that children receive is limited.

Managers ensure that the home is appropriately staffed with a stable staff team. This provides children with consistent care from staff who know them well. All staff have had the training required for their role.

Most staff feel supported by the management team. Staff receive regular practice-related supervision and annual appraisal. Team meetings are regular and reflective. This makes staff feel valued and supports their development.

The registered manager has not been present in the home since 3 October 2022. The deputy manager has been responsible for managing the home. At the time of

the inspection, she was also not available. Management cover has been provided by managers from other homes. The operational lead for children's services supported this inspection. He is knowledgeable on the progress that children have made. He and the responsible individual have a good understanding of the strengths of the home and where improvements are required.

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i)) This specifically relates to the managers ensuring that the environment is improved and meets the needs of the children living in the home.	6 January 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	6 January 2023

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(b)) This specifically relates to the managers ensuring that staff complete restorative work with the children to repair their relationships.	
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— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vii)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff have the skills to identify and keep children safe. The registered manager must also ensure that staff follow this guidance. In addition, the registered manager must adhere to the allegations policy of the organisation, investigate allegations fully and maintain clear records.	6 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— 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;	6 January 2023

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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that monitoring systems are effective in identifying shortfalls in practice. Managers must take action when there are shortfalls identified to develop staff's practice and improve the quality of care. In addition, managers should also regularly review the use of locks in the home to ensure that they are necessary.	
No measure of control or discipline which is excessive, unreasonable or contrary to paragraph (2) may be used in relation to any child. The following measures may not be used to discipline any child— imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation. (Regulation 19 (1) (2)(f)) This is specifically relates to managers ensuring that the use of any consequences are reasonable and proportionate.	6 January 2023

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: 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

Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector

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