

2507724

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 who may have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager holds a level 5 leadership and management qualification and has been registered with Ofsted since March 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. We last visited this setting on 9 February 2021 to carry out an assurance visit. This report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 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: 6 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The overall progress and experience of children requires improvement. This is because there are shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of the home and in the processes put in place to safeguard children.

Children's progress in education is varied. Two children's attendance at school is good. However, one child has been placed on a reduced timetable at school and, as a result, he has missed significant amounts of learning. The managers were unable to evidence how they have been challenging the school to support the child to return to full-time education.

At the time of this inspection, there were four children living at the home. A new child moved into the home in January 2022. Her transition to the home was well supported by staff and, as a result, she has settled well into the home. However, not all of the important paperwork was in place quickly enough to be effective.

Independent plans are in place to help children develop skills; however, these are not frequently reviewed. This means that some plans are not updated to support children to develop skills in areas they struggle with. In addition, children's plans do not clearly record the progress children make. This can result in children's progress not being recognised or celebrated.

Children are not supported to access and contribute to their records and care plans. This oversight prevents children from understanding their needs and risks. In addition, it also prevents children from having the opportunity to inform how they are cared for.

Some children have made progress from their starting points. Staff support children to access a variety of activities in the home and in the community. This includes horse riding, boxing and martial arts. One child told the inspector that they have done more here in a few weeks than they have ever done in their life. Children are highly committed to these sports and feel proud of their achievements.

Staff understand the importance of relationships and support children to see their relatives and others that are important to them. Staff work closely with children's families and social workers to promote family time. Two children are working towards moving back to their family homes.

Children like the staff team and can talk to staff if they have concerns. Children know how to make a complaint if they are not happy about any aspect of their care. Feedback from professionals and family is very positive. One social worker told the inspector that the home has superseded her expectations. Children told the

inspector that they feel safe and happy living at the home. Children seek staff out to spend time with them.

Children feel supported and are settled in the home. The home environment is clean, tidy and welcoming. Children have personalised their bedrooms and helped pick colours and furnishings for communal areas of the home.

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

Children's risk assessments are not all up to date or do not capture all known risks for children. The registered manager has failed to risk assess children smoking a vape or children's access to lighters. These shortfalls mean that there is no guidance in place for staff to follow or address these ongoing behaviours.

Staff reward children for their achievements and positive behaviours. This helps children learn to make positive choices. However, when sanctions are imposed on children, the registered manager is not reviewing their use to assure himself that those sanctions are appropriate. In addition, not all sanctions have been recorded.

Staff know the children well and, as a result, children are settled and there are very few incidents. However, children's missing-from-care protocols do not provide staff with sufficient guidance on what to do when children go missing. On the rare occasion when children have gone missing, overnight staff have not made adequate attempts to keep in contact with children to try and bring about their safe return.

Staff provide children with regular key-work sessions. However, conversations are not always linked to children's care plans or risks. There is a lack of professional curiosity around some behaviours, such as drug misuse and sexual relationships. This creates missed opportunities for staff to explore with children their difficulties and risks, and how to keep themselves safe.

The registered manager has not notified Ofsted of all serious incidents. This prevents Ofsted's oversight of staff's safeguarding practice between inspections.

The registered manager has not always ensured that room searches take place when this is required. For example, in July 2021, a child threatened to stab another child. Staff failed to search the child's bedroom for any weapons; this was despite two knives being found in his room a few days earlier. This oversight has the potential to put children and staff at risk.

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

The registered manager does not monitor the home effectively. His oversight of recording and reporting are poor, and he has failed to identify and address gaps in paperwork or errors in documentation. On occasion, the registered manager has not

ensured that all essential paperwork relating to children was in place quickly enough to be of use and did not escalate this to the relevant professionals.

Managers have failed to ensure that there is an accurate roster in place that records the planned and actual hours worked by staff. As a result, these documents cannot be relied on to identify when staff have been at work and that children have received safe and suitable care.

The home has experienced significant staffing issues over the past year. The manager and deputy manager have covered gaps in the rota to ensure that the care of children is prioritised. While this has not impacted directly on children, there has been a decline in standards in other areas. For example, managers have not ensured that monthly team meetings have taken place. In addition, managers have not ensured that staff receive regular supervision, and there are gaps in staff's training and development. This has the potential to compromise the quality of care children receive.

Managers have not ensured that the home's statement of purpose is updated and shared with Ofsted within the required time frames. This prevents the regulator from having oversight of changes within the home in between inspections.

Despite the shortfalls identified, staff told the inspector that they feel well supported by the managers and work well as a team. New members of staff are provided with an induction and probation programme to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, which supports them to meet the needs of children.

Managers were aware of some of the shortfalls but had not had sufficient time to make changes in practice.

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; and help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's risk assessments are in place, up to date, accurate and include effective strategies for staff to follow. In addition, ensure that staff support children to learn to identify risks and how to keep themselves safe.	4 April 2022
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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	4 April 2022

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that there are effective monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the home and that shortfalls in practice are identified and addressed. In addition, ensure that staff undertake all relevant training to meet children's needs.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that they provide Ofsted with an updated statement of purpose within the required time frame.	4 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive regular supervision.	4 April 2022
The registered person must ensure that— Within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (a)(vii)) This relates to ensuring that there is appropriate management oversight of sanctions and that all sanctions are recorded.	4 April 2022
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;	4 April 2022

ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the staff rota shows planned and actual hours worked by all staff.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; and there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e)) The registered person should ensure that the registered manager notifies Ofsted of all incidents considered serious.	4 April 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to see the home records as living documents, supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)

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: 2507724

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Coventry City Council

Registered provider address: Coventry City Council, Children's Services, The Council House, 42C New Union Street, Coventry CV1 2NH

Responsible individual: Angela Whitrick

Registered manager: Timothy Green

Inspector

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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