

2534215

Registered provider: Shropshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home is registered for one child who has social and/or emotional difficulties or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

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

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

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: 22 March 2022

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
22/03/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the registered manager and their deputy have been absent from the home. A manager from another Shropshire local authority home has been in day-to-day charge, supported by the operations manager. An interim manager has recently been appointed and, at the time of the inspection, had been in post for four weeks. The interim manager has a level 5 qualification in leadership and management and has relevant experience of working in children's homes.

Progress on improving the home's environment has been slow and recommended work from the last inspection remains outstanding. Additionally, paint is now splashed on the living room carpet and there is an area of damage to the wallpaper. Managers acknowledge this lack of progress and a programme of maintenance to improve the home is in place.

Staff support the child's interests and hobbies. The child now has several guinea pigs and a rabbit. Managers and staff develop relationships with the child by talking with her about caring for the animals and being responsible for their health. The child regularly attends the local stables, where she has made friends from the local community. The child recently participated in her first gymkhana. The manager and staff attended, along with the child's parent. This was an important event for the child and she talks about it with pride. Taking part in activities increases a child's self-esteem and social skills.

Staff ensure that children spend time with those people who are important to them. Staff work hard to develop positive relationships with family members. When appropriate, staff advocate for children, so that they can spend safe and enjoyable time with family. This provides children with a positive sense of identity.

The child's health plan is incomplete and of poor quality. This is because important information is missing. For instance, the plan has not been updated following recent appointments. Managers and staff are not clear about the plan for the child's dental care. A lack of a coordinated plan means that the child's health needs are not always met.

Managers and staff understand the barriers to learning and incentives for engaging in education are fully discussed with the child and agreed. This encourages the child to invest in her learning. However, staff do not always provide good educational support. They do not always know what homework the child has or how to find it. The child does not have a laptop. This limits the child's opportunities and development.

Records accurately detail the needs of children in terms of their day-to-day care and how they need to be looked after. However, targets and goals are not clear and

measurable. Staff do not involve children in planning their care. This is a missed opportunity to encourage children to invest in decisions about their life.

The child has many opportunities to express their views, in daily conversations and planned discussions. The child has key adults who she particularly likes to spend time with. The child told the inspector that although she likes staff, she would like staff communication with her to be better.

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

Managers ensure that staff have guidance about the child's use of electronic devices. Staff use their positive relationships with the child to talk about online safety and they make regular phone checks. However, incidents still occur and the child's online risks remain high. Managers have not ensured that staff receive specific training to update their knowledge. Resources identified in a child's plans have not been used to increase their knowledge and safety online. This is a missed opportunity to educate the child about online risks, to keep them safe.

Staff are guided by good-quality risk assessments. Although incidents do occur, they are generally well managed. Staff follow the child's plans and prevent incidents from escalating. As a result, incidents are decreasing in frequency and severity.

Managers and staff promote positive behaviours in the home. Firm boundaries and clear routines enable the child to feel safe and secure. The child is rewarded for being kind and considerate and for overcoming obstacles. Consequences for more negative behaviours are discussed with the child and are fair and proportionate. As a result, staff are providing better care to meet the child's needs.

The child, who was historically at high risk of going missing, no longer goes missing. As a precaution, individual risk assessments tell staff what to do should the child go missing in the future. Information has been shared with the local police and appropriate plans are in place about action to take should the child go missing.

When the child makes an allegation, managers ensure that thorough investigations take place. They work closely with partner agencies, including the child's social worker and the local authority designated officer. The child is told the outcome of investigations. This means that the child feels their concerns are taken seriously and that their views matter.

Risks in the local area are assessed and measures are in place to reduce these risks. Liaison with local police ensures that all risks are known and understood.

Although staff carry out regular fire drills, records contain minimal detail. For instance, it is not clear if the child has been involved in a fire drill at night. Additionally, managers have not updated the annual internal fire risk assessment.

This is the second consecutive time that this regulation has been raised. This continued lack of attention to fire safety places children at serious risk of harm.

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

Since being in post, the interim manager has developed relationships with the child and the staff by spending time with them. Team meetings are a forum to discuss the child's needs and to guide staff to provide a consistent response to the child. Staff say the interim manager has had a positive impact on the home and that morale is good.

Managers have worked hard to meet the seven requirements and one recommendation made at the last inspection in March 2022. At this inspection, the inspector found that although some progress has been made, this is not enough to meet requirements in respect of the supervision of staff and fire safety. In addition, repairs to the home have not been completed and there are now additional areas of damage to the home. Therefore, requirements under regulation 33 and regulation 25 and a recommendation regarding the home's environment have been reissued at this inspection.

Managers have not recruited a team of permanent staff. The child is cared for by seven agency staff and one permanent staff member. Despite the challenges, managers have ensured that the child receives consistent care, and the same staff are in post as at the inspection in March 2022. The child's social worker praised the commitment of the staff and said that the child is building good relationships with them.

Although all staff have received at least one supervision since the last inspection, staff do not yet receive regular supervision. This means that staff do not have dedicated time with a manager to reflect and to develop their practice. This potentially impacts on the quality of care the child receives.

The internal monitoring systems used by managers are not always effective. For example, monitoring of staff's knowledge of the child's activity risk assessments is poor. The child's plans are not always on their files and managers are unclear if a child's plans are current. This affects managers' ability to advocate for children and to ensure that internal plans are meeting a child's needs. Managers acknowledge that in supporting staff to meet the child's day-to-day needs monitoring activities have been neglected.

The statement of purpose is not updated in line with regulation. The registered manager has not updated the document to reflect the changes in staffing. This means that Ofsted and local authorities do not have the most up-to-date information.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff are aware of the child's homework targets and that they support the child to achieve these. Also, that managers advocate for the child to have the resources she needs to support her learning.	30 July 2022
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))	30 July 2022

This specifically relates to managers ensuring that a child's health plan addresses their health needs as identified in their looked after child medical.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. 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 (1) (3)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the managers ensuring that the statement of purpose is updated with details of staff and sent to the regulator.	30 July 2022
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)) This relates to managers ensuring that staff receive specific training to keep children safe online and that managers and staff use resources, including those stated in the child's plans, to educate a child about online risk.	30 July 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.	30 July 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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)(h)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that the most up-to-date plans are on file and information in a child's plans informs internal care planning. This also relates to managers using monitoring systems to ensure that all staff read children's risk assessments.	
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practical, children are aware of the procedures to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (d)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that when staff record fire drills, there is sufficient detail to evidence that children and staff are evacuating the home within reasonable timescales and that a night-time drill has taken place. Also, that an annual fire risk assessment is completed. This requirement was made at the previous inspection and is restated.	30 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees — receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff, including agency staff, receive regular supervision. This requirement was made at the previous inspection and is restated.	30 July 2022

The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept— securely in the children’s home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c)(d)) This relates to managers ensuring that the most up-to-date plans are kept in the home, specifically, that details of the child’s medical and dental treatment are available.	30 July2022
---	--------------------

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of their children.. Children’s homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 13.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff encourage children to see the home’s 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: 2534215

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Shropshire Council

Registered provider address: Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6ND

Responsible individual: Lisa Preston

Registered manager: Matthew Renshaw

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2022