

2555505

Registered provider: Aspiration House Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for six children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and atypical autism, learning disabilities, global development disorder and associated difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2022.

This inspection was carried out to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

Inspection date: 27 July 2022

Date of last inspection: 17 May 2022

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector 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.

The care of children

Children have good daily routines. They are supported by staff to take pride in themselves. For example, staff support children with personal hygiene and self-care. One child has made significant progress in this area and is now able to enjoy making more choices about what he wears. Another child is being supported to manage the changes that come with puberty. As a result, children take pride in their appearance, which contributes to the development of their self-esteem.

Parents and external professionals have confidence in the care provided. They say children are happy and that they have positive relationships with staff. Children live long distances from their families. Staff ensure that they are supported to spend time with them. Children have regular video calls and parents visit the home. The manager has responded to one parent's wish to see her child more often by arranging a suitable venue closer to her. This ensures that children maintain attachments to people who are important to them.

Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and take part in activities. The home is well resourced, with sensory and music rooms. There is also a large garden where children can enjoy outdoor play. The manager and staff ensure that children visit places of interest and undertake outdoor activities. This provides children with opportunities to develop their confidence in social situations.

The manager and staff ensure children's bedrooms and living spaces are homely and personalised, where possible. This is a particularly sensitive issue for one child. The manager and staff are working hard to consider options of how best to support the child's needs in this area and are keeping the situation under review.

The safety of children

The manager and staff ensure that children are kept safe. They understand the risks posed to and from children, as they have good knowledge of their needs. Children have risk assessments which include strategies for behaviour management. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention, which is only ever used as a last resort. There has been one incident where shortfalls were identified. When made aware, leaders and managers took decisive actions to prevent such situations happening again.

Children are making progress with their behaviour. One parent said that, over time, the home has managed his son's behaviour well. He is now able to use strategies to manage his feelings. For another child, incidents are reducing in frequency. As a result, children are becoming more settled.

Children do not go missing from care. Proportionate measures are in place for one child where there is a risk of running away when out with staff. Consequently, the child can still enjoy days out in a safe way.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are recruited safely. Any issues of concern are followed up to a satisfactory conclusion before employment starts. This prevents children from being cared for by unsafe adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The home is led by a highly motivated manager. She knows how important it is for children to feel at home, especially when they are a long distance from their families. The manager has a good knowledge of the children's needs. She works closely with external agencies to ensure these needs are met through individualised care planning.

Leaders and managers ensure there are sufficient staff to care for children. There have been challenges in this area recently, with some staff leaving. Managers have addressed this issue by using agency workers to support the permanent staff. One agency worker is being recruited as a permanent member of the team. Several newly recruited staff are currently awaiting appointment subject to safe recruitment processes. As there are new staff joining the home, a process for their formal supervision needs to be embedded as they are inducted into their roles.

The manager ensures that case records are maintained in respect of children's lives. However, the daily logs relating to children's activities do not contain sufficient detail. This is particularly relevant when they are away from the home, for example, on day trips. The manager recognises this is a shortfall and has plans in place to address this with the staff team to increase the level of recording. This will ensure that records are clear for children and professionals who may need to access them now and in the future.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2022	Full	Good
03/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/09/2021	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that supervision takes place regularly and is clearly recorded. They should also ensure that staff are offered reflective practice supervision sessions, to consider the impact on them of injuries sustained during their work. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children. In most cases, this will be through the provision of a homely, domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, 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 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2555505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspiration House Limited

Registered provider address: Aspiration House Limited, 2nd Floor, Portland Street, Manchester M1 3BE

Responsible individual: Lyndsey Sim

Registered manager: Julie-Ann White

Inspector

Laura Walker, Social Care Inspector

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