

2567658

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to accommodate two children, aged six to 18, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation and was registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

Visit dates: 19 to 20 October 2020

Previous inspection date: Not previously inspected

Previous inspection judgement: Not previously inspected

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children have good relationships with most staff and the manager. This helps children to feel settled and well cared for. Children said that they are happy living in the home. This view is echoed by children's parents and those professionals who are involved in the children's lives.

Staff listen to children and understand their views. This means that children can contribute to the decisions about how they are looked after. For example, one of the children has recently had her room decorated and was able to choose the decor herself.

Due to the support and guidance from staff, children are making good progress in many aspects of their lives. Staff have worked hard to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on children's lives. For example, staff have allowed one child to have pet rats. This has acted as a focus for the child's energies while providing a mechanism for developing her independence skills.

Not all children are accessing full-time education. Staff have used informal learning opportunities and completed academic work set by the school to try to promote one child's educational development. However, the registered manager recognises that the education being provided for this child is not enough. The registered manager is exploring all options to secure a more sustainable and appropriate education placement for the child.

Staff are successful at promoting children's health needs. Throughout the pandemic, children have been able to access the specialist services that they need to meet their physical and emotional health needs.

Staff put in place routines and consistent boundaries. This means that children understand what is expected of them. Staff give appropriate sanctions for challenging behaviour. There is an emphasis on staff using restorative practice and praise for children. Because of this, children feel safe, and challenging behaviour has decreased.

Children have remained active during COVID-19, which has helped promote their emotional health and well-being. Children have completed fun activities such as visiting farms, skate parks and amusement parks, and they have been for walks in the country.

Throughout COVID-19, staff have ensured that children have had contact with their families. When it has not been safe to do so face to face, children have used the telephone or visual technology.

On one occasion, staff took a child to their parent's home without first seeking agreement from the child's local authority. The impact of this was limited, and the child was not at risk of harm.

The safety of children

The manager and staff work hard to keep children safe. Risk assessments are clear and kept up to date. This ensures that staff have the right information they need to manage known risks.

When children go missing, staff take the correct action. Because of this, children are located quickly and returned to the home.

Staff are successful at promoting positive behaviours. Staff praise children at every opportunity so that they receive attention for following the rules and being well behaved.

Staff use de-escalation techniques to good effect. This helps children to learn how to regulate their own behaviours. As a result, children's challenging behaviours have reduced. Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children safe. However, the manager scrutinises such incidents to identify any learning.

The registered manager takes a proactive approach to maintaining harmony in the home. For example, where tensions between children and staff have arisen, mediation meetings are arranged to try and improve these important relationships. This helps children to feel important and that they are listened to.

The registered manager works collaboratively with partner agencies to help children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, the police have completed a session with the children about concerns such as drug use and grooming. This complements the direct work that staff have completed with children to help them recognise dangers and to stay safe.

All staff and children are aware of the risks of COVID-19. Appropriate strategies are in place to reduce the risk to children and staff.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is well respected by staff and children. His child-focused approach ensures that the needs of children are prioritised.

There are currently four staff vacancies. Where possible, the manager has been creative in how he has used his existing staff. This has limited the extent to which agency staff have worked in the home. Despite this, agency staff are being used, and this means that children are sometimes looked after by unfamiliar staff.

Some staff have not completed the mandatory training, including safeguarding training. To manage this, the registered manager ensures that at least one senior member of staff who is trained and has the correct skills works each shift.

Staff receive regular supervision. The registered manager helps staff to reflect on

their work and discusses areas of development and training. He shares good practice and supports staff to learn and enhance their skills.

The registered manager communicates well with parents and professionals. This promotes a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of children.

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
13: The leadership and management standard 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(1)(c))	31/12/2020
13: The leadership and management standard 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—	31/03/2021

ensure that the home's workforce provide continuity of care to each child

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(1)(e))

Recommendations

- Both the arrangements for contact and any contact details (telephone numbers etc.) must be included in the placement plan agreed between the registered person and the child's placing authority and updated regularly ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.15)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2567658

Registered provider: Wynford House Limited

Responsible individual: Christopher Gowlett

Registered manager: James Montgomery-Williams

Inspectors

Jodie Lewis, Social Care Inspector
Paul Robinson, Regulatory Inspector Manager

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