

2626293

Registered provider: Parallel Parents Ltd.

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private organisation. It offers care for up to four children who may have experienced childhood instability, resulting in trauma and associated complex behaviours.

The home was re-registered in August 2021 following a change in the company ownership.

The home has a registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 25 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home is spacious, clean and comfortable. The garden is secure and there is space for outside play. Garden fencing has been moved to prevent children from gaining access from it to a flat roof area. Children enjoy playing pool in the games room or playing in the communal lounge area on computer games. During this inspection, the atmosphere in the home was calm. Some children were enjoying the company of each other and staff during the half-term holiday, while others were spending time with family. Children were cooking pancakes for breakfast and welcomed the registered manager's arrival with a warm hug and an offer of a pancake.

Children develop affectionate relationships with the adults who care for them. They enjoy a range of leisure activities with each other and staff, such as swimming, crazy golf and meals out. Some are active members of community groups, such as Explorer Scouts, and enjoy weekly meetings and camps during holidays and weekends.

Education is important in this home, and all children attend their education setting. For some, this has been challenging because of anxiety or because they have been out of school for some time. Staff support children's education, attending personal education plan meetings and parents' evenings. For one child, staff have attended open evenings at colleges to support them in deciding their next steps. Staff talk to children about the challenges they may face in school and how to negotiate them. Staff advocate on behalf of children, for example in accessing an education setting.

Staff understand the importance of family ties and are proactive in maintaining and safely developing links between the children and family members who are important to them. For some children, this has meant that family time has developed from being supervised by staff for short periods of time to them being able to stay with family members for weekends or parts of holidays. Family members who were spoken to during this inspection said they value the support they are given by staff and the communication they have with them about their child.

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

Children say they feel safe living in the home, and staff are proactive in supporting children to understand risks and how best to manage them. Children rarely go missing from this home, but processes are in place in case they do, which were followed in the two instances that occurred since the last inspection.

Key-work and group sessions consider risks, for example from vaping or the internet. In response to an incident in the community, which did not involve the children from the home, staff held a group discussion with children on how to keep

safe if involved in a similar situation. Children explored with each other how they might react and what would be the safest way to respond.

Practice in relation to the use of the internet is not in line with the policy that is set out in the statement of purpose or the children's guide to the home. Children are allowed access to the internet, and measures are in place to support them to understand the risks and benefits of the internet and to use it safely. The statement of purpose was amended during this inspection to reflect this practice, and managers plan to revise the children's guide.

Risk assessments are in place and revised in response to incidents. Sensors on children's bedroom doors are used for all children currently living in the home. Although risk assessments are in place, they do not sufficiently consider children's age or individual risks and vulnerabilities. Consequently, for some children, there is no clear rationale for the use of the sensors on their bedroom door. The manager accepted this, and the risk assessments for each child will be revised.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort to keep children safe. Records detail the incident and response, and children and staff are given the opportunity to reflect on the incident when they are ready to do so.

Children are supported to be healthy and attend routine medical appointments. They are linked with other professionals when specific needs have been identified, for example in relation to drugs misuse or healthy relationships.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The recommendations from the last inspection have been met. The change of registered manager has not disrupted the management of the home. The manager is qualified and experienced, and staff describe her as supportive and always accessible. Supervision takes place in line with the company policy, but staff also say they are able to seek her help or support between formal supervision sessions. All staff are up to date with core training, such as safeguarding, first aid and physical intervention. Safer recruitment arrangements are in place to reduce the risk of an unsuitable person working in the home.

Children benefit from being able to build relationships with a stable staff team. When gaps arise in the rota due to sickness or unexpected events, members of the team cover these, reducing the need for children to engage with adults they are unfamiliar with. Staff members describe working in a supportive and friendly team and speak about loving their work. New staff have joined the team in preparation for the company opening another house in the area.

Children attend weekly group meetings and discuss what is going well and what they need to work on. Although staff gave some examples of how children's views influence practice in the home, it is not clear from the notes of children's meetings how children contribute to the development of the home or influence its day-to-day running. The children's guide includes some engaging pen pictures of staff, but the

language used in it and the tone of the section on house rules is not accessible or in line with the family-based care that is provided in the home. Children know how to make a complaint, and when they do, they are listened and responded to.

Children sometimes come to live in the home as the result of an emergency. As they move from other parts of the company, the risk is mitigated by the manager having access to information to inform the matching of new children with children already living in the home. One child described staff helping him settle into the home, which is some distance from where he had been living. When asked to describe the home to a child who might be moving in, he jokingly said, 'It's not the worst!' He went on to say that he gets on well with the staff and the home is good.

The registered manager knows the children well and has effective oversight of their care and the progress they are making.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that risks to children are continually and actively assessed, and any steps taken to safeguard them are reviewed and revised in response to changing circumstances. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should provide a children's guide that is accessible to children and reflects practice in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

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: 2626293

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Parallel Parents Ltd.

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Heaviley, Stockport SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Sinead Lewis

Registered manager: Angela Dwyer

Inspector

Janet Fraser, His Majesty's Inspector

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