

2626293

Registered provider: Parallel Parents Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned. It provides care for up to four children with social and emotional difficulties. Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection and were spoken to by the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2022.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

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: 5 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
25/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff build trusting relationships with children, which helps them to talk more openly about their emotions and lived experiences. Staff display a loving and caring approach towards children. Children actively seek out physical affection and attention from staff and enjoy spending time with them.

Staff support children to have good routines, which enables them to have a positive structure to their day. All the children either attend school or college. Staff encourage children to explore clubs and activities, which helps to promote their interests and build their relationships with one another.

The manager recognises the importance of children spending time with family and friends. Children are content with the arrangements they have and feel they can approach staff to discuss any worries they may have about this issue.

The manager and staff understand the importance of ensuring that children have planned moves to and from the home. One child had previous experience of living in the home and was able to return for a short period. The child had positive memories of the home, which allowed them to settle back in well, and they enjoyed their stay. Staff make a conscious effort to remain in contact with children who move on from the home to offer additional support when needed.

The home is warm, welcoming and has a family atmosphere. Children's artwork and photos of them are proudly on display. However, there have been some delays in maintenance jobs being completed within reasonable timescales, which means the decor of the home is not of as high a standard as it could be throughout.

Staff ensure that children are in good health and support them to attend important health appointments. Meals are planned for the week and staff encourage children to be part of this process. However, the staff and manager lock some food items away in the office to stop children accessing certain foods. This does not provide a nurturing response to children's needs and fails to consider more child-friendly ways of supporting children to have healthy diets.

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

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans are detailed and clear. These plans provide staff with information and guidance to support children's individual needs effectively. In addition, the manager seeks advice from in-house specialist support services to provide guidance when there is a gap in the manager's and staff's knowledge. This helps staff have a better understanding of children's needs and respond to them more effectively.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They understand the child protection policies and procedures and know how to report concerns in a professional and confident manner. Staff and the manager have high levels of communication with one another due to the high frequency of team meetings and regular supervision. This helps to ensure that children are protected from harm.

Staff support children to engage with specialist support services to meet their additional needs and protect them. For example, staff made an immediate referral to a service that supported children who are at risk of knife crime and anti-social behaviour when this was identified as a need for one child. There were no further incidents involving knives after this intervention.

Incidents of children going missing from home are low. Staff are highly proactive when children have gone missing from home, and they go above and beyond to make sure the child is safe. For example, on one occasion, a member of staff who was not on shift helped to look for a child due to knowing the area well. When located, children are welcomed home and offered reassurance. This demonstrates that staff are committed to children's welfare and safety.

There have been a high number of incidents of physical intervention. The majority of these incidents have been proportionate, and staff have used physical intervention as a last resort. However, on some occasions, staff have not been effective in using de-escalation techniques, and this has led to physical intervention being used before all other methods to support children have been exhausted. The manager has identified these shortfalls in practice and addressed them with staff and discussed incidents in team meetings. However, a lessons learned or critical review of the high level of restraints has not been completed, which could have helped identify further learning to improve practice.

There have been a number of allegations made against staff. The manager has responded quickly to these allegations, in line with policy. However, the number and type of allegations were unusual for the home. The manager did not complete a critical analysis review to explore this significant change, which would have considered the reasons for this change and any learning that could be taken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager puts children at the heart of her practice, and this approach is also reflected by the two trainee managers in the home. She has high aspirations for all children and leads by example. She is an approachable and reflective manager. Staff feel that managers are supportive. One staff member explained that the environment allows staff to not 'feel uncomfortable to raise anything'. This is also observed in children's interactions with staff, whereby children feel comfortable to talk about difficult topics with them.

Staff support one another and feel they are a 'tight team'. There have been no changes in staff since the last inspection, meaning children have consistent care. All staff are suitably qualified, which enables children to be cared for by adults with a good level of expertise. Furthermore, team morale is high due to positive working relationships and the support provided by managers. Managers reinforce this by completing regular staff supervisions and appraisals.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development within the home. She has implemented learning from previous inspections by improving internal recording systems. For example, a form was adapted to allow for more reflective discussions, and all significant incidents have a checklist to ensure that senior managers are updated. This means that monitoring systems are more effective and help to provide transparent practice within the home.

The manager and staff encourage children to express their views, and they advocate on behalf of children when services are not effective. For example, the manager escalated a child's autism assessment to ensure that they were able to receive the right support from staff and school. Another child had their time spent with their family reduced in line with their wishes, which had been shared by the manager with the child's social worker. This resulted in the child feeling less anxious. This highlights how children's participation is valued, and children feel supported by managers to make age-appropriate decisions.

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, The 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; and de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(ix)(xi)) This specifically relates to the manager and staff consistently implementing the agreed de-escalation techniques in line with children's plans, while being aware of children's individual communication and behaviour needs.	25 February 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is, as far as possible, a domestic rather than institutional environment. The rationale for food being locked away should be reviewed and consideration should be given to less restrictive ways of managing a child's food intake. In addition, maintenance jobs should be acted on quickly to facilitate a homely environment for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should make best use of internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement, especially learning from high numbers of restraint and allegations. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned, critical reflections and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6LR

Responsible individual: Sinead Lewis

Registered manager: Angela Davies

Inspector

Caoimhe Richards, Social Care Inspector

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