

2630934

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a large national provider. The home provides care for up to five children with social and/or emotional difficulties and mild learning disabilities.

The home does not have a registered manager. An acting manager has managed the home since April 2024. The acting manager has a relevant management qualification.

Two children live in the home. One child was present for most of the inspection and one child was briefly present. The inspector was able to speak with and observe both children and gather their views.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 September 2024

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/06/2023	Full	Good
30/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, a sibling group of four children have left the home. The children lived there for ten months, and they all made progress from their starting points. When the time was right, staff worked with social work professionals and the children's carers to support the children to move on in a planned way.

Two children currently live at the home. One child has lived there for four months and one for three months. Managers consulted with agencies and with children to support the children to move in a planned way. Children visited the home to choose their bedroom and say how they want it decorated. They met staff on more than one occasion. One child moved from another home in the company with staff from that home. Social workers say that children have quickly settled and established good relationships with staff.

Children say they like living in the home and they like the staff. One child said he liked the home 'a hundred thousand percent'.

One child attends a school run by the company that meets their needs. The child's teacher said that staff work with the school and share information and strategies that enable the child to achieve their potential. Despite managers' best efforts, one child does not yet have a school place. Managers and staff do not have arrangements in place for structured activities which will support the child and maintain their interest in education.

Staff support children to attend routine health appointments, and specialist appointments. Managers and staff consult with children's social workers and parents and carers, and they seek support for children's emotional health when needed. Managers also ensure that staff receive specialist training to meet children's complex physical health needs. The multi-team approach means that children's holistic health needs are met.

Children spend time with people who are important to them. This helps children to maintain lifelong relationships. When appropriate, staff work in partnership with parents and carers. A parent said, 'Staff are really friendly and lovely with him... they run things past me and ask 'What do you think?''

Children participate in a variety of activities that supports positive relationships and children's confidence. Children spend time together and with staff in the home's spacious garden. Staff arrange activities for children, such as going to the skate park and going to a local theme park and to the zoo. Staff capture children's experiences and activities in lovely memory books, which they share with children and with parents and carers. This supports children's self-esteem and is a valuable contribution to children's life story.

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

The manager and staff know how to keep children safe. Clear risk management plans are regularly updated. These provide staff with the information and guidance they need to understand and support the specific vulnerabilities and risks for children. Physical intervention is rarely used because staff use approved strategies to de-escalate children's complex behaviours. Children have been held twice since the last inspection.

The current children do not go missing from the home. As a safeguard, managers have shared information with the local police. However, managers have not ensured that staff have personalised advice relevant to children's needs should a child go missing.

Processes for the safe administration of medication are in place. However, staff do not always follow them. On two recent occasions, children have not received the medication they need when they need it. When staff realised their mistake, they took immediate action and sought medical advice and children did not come to harm. Managers plan to improve staff practice through individual supervision and additional training.

When children are at risk of harm, managers and staff follow safeguarding procedures. They share information with safeguarding agencies, including social workers and the police, and participate and contribute to statutory safeguarding meetings. When necessary, they consult with the local authority designated officer and implement agreed strategies to keep children safe.

Responses to allegations and complaints are effective and help to ensure that children feel listened to and are kept safe from harm. When children complain or make allegations, managers carry out thorough investigations and, when necessary, they take action to improve staff practice. Managers then consult with children and ensure that they are happy with any actions taken.

Children are kept safe online. Staff complete ongoing work with children about the dangers presented online, which is educational and informative. Additionally, managers have ensured that there are the necessary age-related restrictions on all devices. Staff are vigilant about online risks. On the rare occasion that an incident occurs which compromises children's online safety, managers and staff act quickly. They amend safeguarding strategies and complete targeted work to increase children's learning.

Relations between children are good and there is no bullying in the home. However, staff do not use rewards and incentives with children to encourage and recognise other positive behaviours. This is a missed opportunity to support children to learn self-regulation and important social skills.

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

Since the last inspection, two managers have left the home. The current manager was previously the deputy manager of the home. The manager is supported by a newly appointed deputy manager, who moved with one of the children from a sister home. The

manager and the deputy manager have, therefore, been a consistent presence in the lives of the children.

Staff say that the home feels settled after a period of change throughout the company and in the management of the home. They say that the home is 'well run', and that they like working in the home. Staff say the home is 'homely' and they want more children to come to live there.

Managers and staff work in partnership with professionals from other agencies. External professionals are positive about communication. They say that staff are nurturing with children and that staff keep children safe.

The manager promotes a supportive environment for staff to work in. Team meetings are a place where staff say they can express their views. Staff receive regular, good quality supervision which is supportive and child focused. However, staff have not received an annual appraisal. This limits staff's development and their aspirations.

Managers ensure that staff have access to a range of training opportunities to meet the child's needs. However, staff have not undertaken training relevant to all the children's specific needs. Staff training does not enable staff to fully understand one child's complex behaviours. The manager has not developed monitoring systems to address this shortfall.

Children receive consistent care that has enabled children to develop relationships with adults who know them well. This is because the home is fully staffed and any shortfalls in staffing are covered by existing core staff. Of the eight staff, three have a relevant qualification and four are enrolled on the qualification.

Managers ensure that staff manage health and safety matters and fire safety effectively. As a result, children live in a home that is physically safe and free from hazards. The manager has assessed the risks in the local area and ensured that the home is safely located.

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 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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that all staff follow procedures for the safe administration of medication.	31 October 2024
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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2) (c)(h)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff receive relevant training to meet children's needs and understand children's behaviours and that managers monitor training using effective monitoring systems.	31 October 2024
The registered person must ensure that all employees—	31 October 2024

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.
(Regulation 33 (4)(c))

This specifically relates to managers ensuring that staff receive an annual appraisal.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities, and staff should engage with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)

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: 2630934

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

Responsible individual: Patricia Bogle

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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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

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