

2644474

Registered provider: Gracebridge Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was appointed in April 2023 and is yet to complete their fit person interview to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 31 August and 1 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 14 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/09/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children receive a mixed experience living in this home. Although children experience positive relationships with staff and have made good progress, the actions taken by managers and staff to address bullying behaviours and to support children who have been bullied by other children require improvement.

When children move into the home, the manager does not always carry out an effective assessment of the children's needs, risks and behaviours and how these may interplay with those of the existing children living in the home. This has resulted in the children being exposed to bullying from other children living at this home.

Staff support children with a wide range of activities in the local area and the wider community. For example, children enjoy regular activities such as playing pool, bike rides, walking, going to the cinema, going to the gym and being members of football clubs. This support enables the children to have different experiences as well as to have the confidence to socialise with others and be part of community clubs.

Two children have recently enjoyed a holiday abroad. This was the children's first experience of going on a plane and enjoying a holiday in a different country. This positive experience provided an opportunity to have fun and create memories.

Children enjoy good health. Staff work closely with a variety of health services and professionals. Staff support children to attend all their health care appointments. This has helped to maintain children's physical well-being.

Children are making progress in their education. For example, one headteacher told the inspector that one child's engagement with learning and behaviour at school has significantly improved. This is a result of the strong working relationship with the staff in the home to promote the educational needs of children.

Staff support children to spend time with their families. This has helped children to keep in contact with people who are important to them.

Staff support children with their identity and cultural needs. For example, one child was supported by staff with their fasting during the month of Ramadan. Staff helped the child to do this safely. This helped the child to feel valued.

The physical environment of the home is a nurturing environment, and children's bedrooms are personalised to their taste. As a result, children enjoy living in this home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff do not always show sufficient curiosity following incidents to ensure that children do not require immediate support or medical advice. For example, staff did not fully explore an incident that took place with an aerosol. This was a missed opportunity to understand what had occurred and to ensure that the child's health had not been adversely impacted.

Following incidents, managers do not always put in place proactive strategies to safeguard children. For example, following an incident of a child being assaulted by their peers, managers gave the victim of this assault a panic button to alert staff should a similar incident occur. This approach is reactive and does not prevent further incidents from occurring. In addition, it placed the responsibility on the child to alert staff about their concerns. This does not reassure children that effective strategies are put in place to protect them from harm.

Children are not supported well to understand bullying behaviours and the impact that these have on others. Following incidents of bullying, sessions are arranged for children to discuss their concerns together. This does not provide the opportunity for children to talk about and reflect on their experiences separately. This hinders managers and staff from gaining a good understanding of how children are feeling and the impact that incidents of bullying have had on them. In addition, staff have not carried out direct work with children or had conversations about bullying or positive relationships with their peers. This does not help children to understand what acceptable behaviour is.

Managers do not always share all the relevant information about incidents involving children with children's social workers. This means children's placing authorities do not have the required information to take action to protect children in a timely manner.

Records relating to safeguarding incidents do not always provide a coherent account of all the information. They do not evidence multi-agency decision-making or the actions taken by other agencies, the manager or staff. This does not enable other agencies, including Ofsted, to understand how incidents have been responded to and what actions have been put in place to ensure children's safety.

On other occasions, staff have acted quickly and appropriately to safeguard children when they have been harmed while out in the community by unknown people. They took action to report concerns to the police and to implement strategies to safeguard children. In addition, staff helped children to regain the confidence to go out into the community without staff support.

Staff have helped children to identify some risks, such as when out in the community, when using the internet and the risk of exploitation. As a result, children are learning to keep themselves safe when presented with these risks.

Overall, managers and staff have used incentives effectively to support children to develop more positive behaviours. As a result, incidents requiring the use of restraint have been reduced in the home. When incidents of restraint have occurred, staff have used restraint appropriately to prevent children from placing themselves and others at risk of serious harm. The restraints used by staff are reasonable, necessary and proportionate.

Children do not go missing from the home, and there have been no complaints or allegations.

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

A new manager was appointed in April 2023 and is yet to be registered with Ofsted. She wants the best for the children. The manager is supported by an equally committed deputy manager and staff team, who want to provide a homely and nurturing environment for children. However, there are areas of the leadership and management of the home that require improvement.

On occasion, the manager and staff have completed multiple online training courses in a single day. For example, the manager and staff have completed 18 online courses in one day. This has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of this training and the staff's ability to understand and reflect on the training provided.

The manager's monitoring and reviewing of records require improvement. For example, the manager does not record the action taken and does not have all the required statutory documentation relating to safeguarding incidents. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategies put in place to protect children from harm.

The independent person's monitoring of the home is variable. This is because the independent person does not always consider if children are effectively safeguarded and if the conduct of the managers and staff promotes children's well-being. For example, they do not review all relevant incidents that have occurred in the home to inform their analysis of practice. This does not aid the leaders' and managers' understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development.

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— understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xii)(xiii)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is support in place for children who have been bullied and those who engage in bullying and plan to minimise such incidents from happening. In addition, ensure that children are supported to understand what bullying looks like, the impact of bullying and unacceptable behaviours.	7 December 2023
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—	7 December 2023

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that managers and staff take effective action to reduce the risks to children. The registered person must also ensure that the manager and staff report all safeguarding incidents in a timely manner to all external agencies. In addition, the registered person must ensure that records of the action taken and statutory documentation relating to safeguarding concerns are kept at the home.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, the registered person must share all relevant details with social workers following incidents.	7 December 2023
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must inspect all relevant records, including incident records, that would inform the independent visitor's view of the home's ability to safeguard and promote children's welfare.	7 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and to reflect on their learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make the best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. ('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: 2644474

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gracebridge Care

Registered provider address: Rear of Arden Lodge, 946 Warwick Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 6QG

Responsible individual: Richard Perry

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sam Dulay-Kainth, Social Care Inspector

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