

2773915

Registered provider: Albrighton Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for two children with learning disabilities. The home is privately owned.

The manager has been registered since 26 April 2024. However, at the time of this inspection he was away from work. There is an interim manager in post who is suitably experienced and holds a relevant level 5 qualification.

Since the home was registered with Ofsted, one child has moved into the home. The child was present during the inspection, and spoke to the inspector.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child currently living at the home spoke positively about their experiences and about the staff who look after them, saying, 'I really like living in the home.' The child spoke fondly about the relationships they have built with the staff and the care staff provide, commenting, 'especially the food they make for me.'

The child enjoys a range of activities and experiences. These include climbing, trampolining and going to an adventure park. The child has recently earned a reward for completing a 7-kilometre bike ride and has also learned to swim. The child spoke excitedly about their favourite activity of mountain biking. These experiences have boosted the child's self-esteem and confidence, contributing to their overall well-being.

Staff ensure that the child's health needs are met. The child is supported to attend all their routine health appointments. Additionally, staff seek specialist help when necessary.

The child attends school and has excellent attendance. The manager and staff support the child in their education. Staff communicate regularly with education providers and professionals to share education information, and the child's progress and achievements. This helps the child to reach their goals.

Staff actively encourage the child to develop their independence. Staff support the development of their skills, such as tending to their personal needs, tidying their bedroom, and preparing and cooking simple meals. During the inspection, the child was seen preparing their own lunchbox, cutting fruit to include in their lunch. The child proudly talked about how much they enjoy making their own lunch. These opportunities help children to take on appropriate levels of responsibility to develop essential skills for their future.

Ethnicity is valued and respected in this home. The child identifies as having a particular faith, and staff support the child to connect with local places of worship. The child spoke confidently about the new knowledge they gained about their faith during their conversations with the faith leader. This is important because it supports the child's beliefs and heritage, fostering a sense of belonging as well as providing continuity with their cultural upbringing.

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

There have been no safeguarding concerns and no episodes of the child going missing from the home. This is a testament to the positive and trusting relationships that staff develop with the child. Staff know how to keep the child safe. There are clear plans and protocols in place that tell staff what actions to take if serious incidents occur.

Staff help the child to understand their behaviours and successes. These are celebrated through verbal praise and rewards. For example, the child can choose to buy something they want or pick an activity. On one occasion, the child enjoyed their chosen reward: a day trip to a theme park. Consequences are not used often. When they are used, it is for the purpose of reinforcing boundaries to ensure the child's safety.

In the main, the child's care plans and risk assessments provide detailed information on their current risks and give guidance to staff to follow. However, the child's medication plans do not detail the specific actions for staff to take when medication is missed or refused. While this shortfall has not had a detrimental impact on the child, the lack of clarity does not support staff to minimise risks.

There has been one incident of physical intervention since the home opened. Restraint is used only as a last resort and is managed well. However, the child was not spoken to within the required timescale of the incident occurring. This delay can negatively affect the child by reducing their sense of safety and trust. It also makes it harder for the child to process their emotions, understand what has happened and learn from the experience. The lack of timely oversight and evaluation prevents managers from assessing whether restraint practices are proportionate, safe or effective, and limits opportunities for staff to learn from these incidents.

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

The interim manager is appropriately qualified and experienced. They have been managing the home for just over a month and have introduced some good systems. One staff member said that the new manager 'is fantastic and manages and leads the team well and supports [name of child] well.' However, there are still shortfalls, which the manager acknowledged during the inspection. The manager has put processes in place to embed these new systems and gave assurances that improvements will follow once they are fully implemented.

The manager's monitoring is not effective in identifying shortfalls. Several gaps were found in recording practices, such as inconsistent updates in the child's key-worker conversations and daily logs, which are not recorded thoroughly. Gaps in monitoring limit the manager's ability to oversee the quality of care provided to the child, and to identify trends and patterns which may require intervention or improvement. As a result, opportunities to improve staff practice by learning from incidents are reduced.

The failure of visitors and senior leaders to consistently sign in and out of the home's visitors' book poses a significant health and safety risk, as it becomes unclear who is in the home during an emergency evacuation. This raises additional safeguarding concerns, as the presence of unaccounted adults could compromise the safety and well-being of the child.

Leaders fail to provide welfare support to staff consistently, contradicting the home's statement of purpose. The previous registered manager did not offer adequate support

to the staff in their roles and responsibilities, resulting in a decline in staff morale that went unaddressed by the leadership team. This was due to a lack of visits to the home and oversight from senior leaders. Their absence of direct involvement left staff feeling unsupported and disconnected from the leadership team.

The child does not have access to an independent advocate. The child lacks advocacy to advise them and ensure that they have the independent support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and life. As a result, the child may not understand their rights and have access to their entitlements.

The new manager's implementation of monthly team meetings, staff supervision and early appraisals promotes staff practice and staff morale. These meetings provide consistent opportunities for feedback, development and communication. This also helps staff to be supported in their roles. This structured approach fosters a more positive work environment, improving overall team performance.

Staff receive regular training. Training provided ensures that staff have the skills and competencies necessary to meet the diverse needs of the child. There are systems in place to make sure that training is regularly updated or refreshed.

The manager and staff have positive relationships with external professionals. An education professional said that there is 'excellent communication with the home'. This means there is a coordinated approach to meeting the child's needs.

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 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(h)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all leaders, including the responsible individual, offer welfare support to all the staff in alignment with the home's statement of purpose. Leaders must ensure the manager and staff work collaboratively as a team, fostering a healthy and supportive workplace culture within the home. Monitoring systems must be effective in quickly identifying any shortcomings.	11 November 2024
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in	11 November 2024

relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that all children's records are up to date and that all information recorded is clear and factual.	
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that a record is maintained for all visitors to the home, including when the home's responsible individual visits. All visitors' full names and the purpose of their visit must be clearly documented.	11 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children have access to appropriate advocacy support and have an independent advocate to advise them and ensure that they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should ensure children's medication plans clearly detail action staff have to follow if children miss, refuse or overdose on medication. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that any children involved in a physical intervention are spoken to within the designated time frames. They should also ensure that clear recordings of these conversations are maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: 2773915

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Albrighton Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 15 Heritage Park, Hayes Way, Cannock WS11 7LT

Responsible individual: Kerry Hutchinson

Registered manager: Paul Johnson

Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2024