

SC007290

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider to care for up to four children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in October 1998. The manager registered in 2007.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home.

This inspection started on 1 October 2024. The inspector returned on 29 October 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October and 29 and 30 October 2024

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: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
27/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/01/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences and progress are varied.

Both children have had a period of absence from education. This has now stabilised, and one child is attending school and the other child is going to college. Both children are doing well academically.

Staff encourage children to maintain an active lifestyle. Children enjoy a range of leisure opportunities in the local community that promote their health and well-being. However, staff do not always ensure that children are supported to access specialist health services.

Children are not always encouraged to engage in meaningful conversations with staff. This means that children are not always provided with enough support to help them to understand potential risks that can impact on their safety and well-being.

Children spend time with their families. Staff support these relationships and communicate well with family members.

Leaders and managers do not always promote a homely environment by encouraging staff and children to socialise together in the communal areas. Instead, children spend most of their time in their bedrooms; this includes eating their meals in their bedrooms.

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

Staff do not take into consideration all known risks that leave children vulnerable. There is a lack of professional curiosity when children return home with unexplained items that could be indicators that a child is at risk of exploitation. Staff do not always consider items that are found in a child's bedroom as potential risks. When children have items delivered to the home, the staff are not curious to question what might be in these parcels and whether these pose a risk to a child.

Staff do not always communicate effectively with each other about children's whereabouts. This has resulted in staff not taking prompt action to trigger the home's process for reporting a child as missing from care.

Children's risk assessments vary in quality. Staff do not ensure that these records are kept up to date as changes in children's vulnerabilities emerge. This means that staff do not have access to the most current information to help them to promote the children's welfare.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that safe recruitment procedures are always followed. This has enabled staff to be employed with gaps in their employment history going unchecked.

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

The home has had a stable leadership and management team for several years. The registered manager is experienced and has the relevant qualifications.

The home is currently going through a period of change as the organisation restructures. This period has had an impact on staff stability. This has created some inconsistency for the children and limits their opportunities to form positive and lasting relationships with adults who are looking after them.

Managers have monitoring systems in place to evaluate and assess the quality of care. However, these are not always effective in picking up shortfalls in staff practice.

Staff receive appropriate training to meet the children's needs. Training has recently been booked for staff to receive additional training on professional curiosity and safeguarding.

Managers and staff receive regular supervision, and all staff have received an annual appraisal. This provides managers and staff with the opportunity to receive regular feedback on their practice, while having their performance formally reviewed. However, records are not always clear on how children's care is covered in these sessions.

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— communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; strive to gain each child's respect and trust. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(viii)) In particular, ensure that children are encouraged to engage in meaningful conversations with staff and these are recorded in the child's file.	31 January 2025
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—	31 January 2025

that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, ensure that staff are professionally curious, especially when children receive deliveries to the home that could put them at risk.	
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; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)) In particular, ensure the restructuring of staff is completed to enable clear roles and responsibilities and continuity of care for the children. There is oversight by leaders and managers of the staff’s recordings on children’s files.	31 January 2025
The care planning standard is that children—	31 January 2025

receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that arrangements are in place to—

manage and review the placement of each child in the home.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii))

In particular, children's care plans should be up to date and in line with children's needs.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability regarding when to report a child missing. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 52, paragraph 10.2)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This includes checking gaps in employment histories. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered should ensure a homely domestic environment. In particular, this refers to children socialising in communal areas with staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC007290

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Careen Smith

Registered manager: Deborah Pacquette

Inspector

Richard Wyper, Social Care Inspector

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