

SC038435

Sunfield Children's Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is a children's home registered with Ofsted. It is also a residential special school registered by the Department of Education. Since May 2017, it has become a subsidiary of the Ruskin Mill Trust. The home is registered to accommodate 61 children who have severe and complex learning difficulties and/or behavioural needs, including seven placements for children who require short breaks. There are 12 houses within the grounds of the school. At the time of this inspection, six homes were open and accommodating 19 children.

Inspection date: 5 December 2017

This monitoring visit

Over the last eight months, the service has gone through considerable restructuring. This has led to changes in staffing and the overall vision for the provision of care and teaching. This has created a degree of uncertainty for many staff, parents and children. The service remains in a period of transition, as new ways of working continue to be embedded.

During this visit, considerable time was taken to secure the views of both teaching and care staff. This included using a questionnaire to help gather staff views. The findings from these questionnaires show that the majority of staff feel that children are safe and that behaviour management is well managed. One member of staff said, 'The school is being led and managed more effectively than in the past and communication has improved. On the whole, behaviour support is better with less reliance on physical intervention.' Another member of staff said they had seen a 'massive improvement'.

The responses to the questionnaires show that there are mixed views on how staff feel about whether they are being treated fairly and how well leaders and managers listen and support them. One member of staff told the inspectors that standards had definitely improved. However, if staff question any change and the impact this may have on children, then 'senior management shut them down'. Consequently, not all staff feel able to raise concerns confident in the knowledge that they will be listened

to. Work is ongoing to continue to improve communication between managers and staff as the organisation goes through a period of significant change.

A few staff report ongoing concerns about insufficient staffing. This is a reoccurring feature that has been identified at inspections completed over the past eight months. A small number of staff feel that staffing levels remain unsafe.

More positively, from visiting the different houses, inspectors observed staff being sensitive to children's emotional and behavioural needs. Staff work closely with therapists to help them meet the children's individual needs. Managers are working hard to achieve greater consistency for children and steps are in place to recruit permanent staff. In the meantime, consistent bank and agency staff are being assigned to particular homes. Although the number of different staff working with children is still too high, this is beginning to reduce. As a result, children are beginning to be cared for by more familiar staff.

Practice over the safe administration of medication remains an area of weakness. Although these weaknesses are mainly administrative errors, the absence of an accurate record of when a medicine is administered creates a potential risk to children's health. This is because uncertainty emerges over whether children have received their required medication as prescribed.

There are shortfalls in safe recruitment practice, particularly regarding the background checks for agency staff. This means that leaders don't have the necessary assurance that all agency staff working for them have all checks completed to match the requirements set by regulation. There are similar shortfalls in the recruitment of teaching staff.

On at least one occasion, a child was able to access a vehicle that was left unlocked in the school grounds. During the inspection, inspectors found that some vehicles had been left unlocked and so were accessible to children. This shows that managers and staff do not consistently learn from all incidents that may pose a risk to children. This does not promote children's safety or welfare.

Work is being undertaken to improve the home's environment. However, managers have not acted quickly to replace the locking mechanism on one child's bedroom door with a more suitable one. As a result, they have not responded to a recommendation raised following an investigation into an alleged safeguarding incident. Failing to take prompt action does not fully promote children's welfare and safety.

There continues to be a weakness in the residential provision on how information is recorded when a physical intervention is necessary. This is again an administrative error. However, the monitoring and review process is not picking up these shortfalls. This means that records do not meet regulation.

There are still gaps in staff training. Although the majority of staff have received training in key areas of practice, some gaps remain. For example, some staff have still not completed their care of medicines training, and some staff are overdue safeguarding training. These delays leave some staff without the knowledge and

skills necessary to ensure that children's welfare is sufficiently promoted.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/06/2017	Full	Inadequate
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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, 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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))*	31/01/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (Regulation 12(1)) This is in specific reference to ensuring that vehicles are appropriately secure.	31/01/2018
The registered person must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to any individual employed to work in the children's home in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(3)(d))	31/01/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided by the home (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(h))	31/01/2018
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure.	31/01/2018

Within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(b)(c))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that 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. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(c)) This is in specific reference to staff training in the care of medicines and safeguarding.	31/01/2018
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(b)(2)(c)) This is in specific reference to having suitable locking devices fitted to children's bedroom doors.	31/01/2018

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC038435

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Sunfield Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Clent Grove, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire
DY9 9PB

Responsible individual: Graeme Cheyne

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspectors

Michelle Moss, social care inspector

Jackie Line, social care inspector

Peter Hylton, social care compliance inspector

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