

SC066560

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2022	Full	Good
01/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/09/2019	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting and positive relationships with staff. They are treated with dignity and respect. The children said that if they have a problem or any worries they can speak to the staff, who do listen.

The manager and staff work with placing authorities and families to promote positive and meaningful family time, in line with agreed plans. Children are also supported to spend time with friends. This means that children have age-appropriate social interactions and can build skills and strategies to form and maintain relationships and gain a sense of their own identity.

Children who are new to the home are always welcomed sensitively and with the best possible planning. There is a robust referral process which is used to assess the needs of children who already live in the home and the needs of children who may be new to the home. This ensures that there is a child-centred approach when making decisions about whether staff are able to support children to live together.

Children are making good progress with their education. When one child faced difficulties with their education provider, the manager and staff advocated on their behalf. They ensured that the child's educational needs were being met while an alternative school was identified. The manager has taken swift action to ensure that a child who is new to the home is enrolled in a school which will meet their cultural needs.

Staff support and encourage children's cultural identities. One child has limited English language. Staff have adapted their communication methods to ensure that the child understands them and that they feel included in the home. Their religious beliefs are encouraged. One child is supported to attend the local mosque and celebrate their religious festivals, such as Ramadan.

Staff are proactive in seeking health advice when needed. They work in partnership with health professionals to ensure that the children's health needs are met and that children have access to necessary health services.

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

Leaders and managers have responded suitably when safeguarding concerns have been raised. They have taken all necessary action to investigate and address these complaints and have worked in partnership with relevant professionals, such as the local authority designated officer and the police.

Each child's individual risks are detailed in their risk management plans. These are robust documents which are frequently updated and give clear guidance to staff,

which ensures a consistent response to children's behaviours. Staff understand the content of these documents and put guidance into practice.

There have been instances when children have been physically held, and holds have been reasonable and proportionate. They are recorded appropriately, and all relevant professionals notified. The manager has evaluated each incident and children are given the opportunity for a debrief after a hold has taken place. However, these focus on the child's behaviour and do not ensure that the child understands the reason that a hold was necessary. In addition to this, staff are not always spoken to about the use of a hold.

There are some shortfalls in recruitment processes. Gaps in employment history for staff are not always fully explored. Recruitment of staff must be robust and in line with regulation to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children.

Direct work takes place around relevant topics, such as cannabis use, emotional well-being and education. This helps the children to learn how to keep themselves safe. These sessions are proactive but also delivered in response to new risks that arise.

When children go missing from home, there are clear and comprehensive plans in place for staff to follow. The manager and staff work collaboratively with external professionals, such as the local police and missing-from-home team, to ensure well-coordinated responses when children go missing. Staff have been proactive in ensuring that children's well-being remains a priority while they are away from the home. However, return home interviews are not always recorded and the manager does not use her evaluation of the incident to identify lessons learned.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager shows an ambitious vision, with high expectations for what all children can achieve. The staff are positive about the manager and describe a supportive environment. Staff spoken to describe the manager as readily available to provide advice and guidance.

The manager has systems in place for the monitoring and review of the home. These systems generally work well. However, there have been some shortfalls in the manager's oversight of processes and procedures.

There is a consistent staff team which provides stability for the children and means that children are always cared for by staff who know them well. Staff are suitably trained and qualified.

Imposed consequences are not always evaluated for effectiveness. The manager should ensure that all incidents of control and discipline are recorded and have regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and effective.

The manager and staff work proactively and positively with other agencies and professionals. They seek to build effective working relationships to secure positive outcomes for children. However, for one child whose review has passed the required timescale and whose care plan is not up to date, there is a lack of challenge of the placing authority.

Staff supervisions take place regularly and focus on children's experiences. They are practice-led, meaning that staff are reflective and learn from experiences. Individual supervision is also used as a development opportunity for staff.

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 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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 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)(vii)(b)(i)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that imposed consequences are reviewed for effectiveness. In addition to this, the registered person must ensure that following a hold, there is a record kept showing that staff have been spoken to about the use of the measure and children are supported to understand why a hold has been used.	22 May 2023
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each	22 May 2023

child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c)) Specifically, the registered person must challenge the placing authority if children's reviews do not take place within agreed timescales and if children's relevant plans are not up to date.	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is a full employment history for each staff member and an explanation for any gaps in employment.	22 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. A record of the return home interview should be recorded in the missing-from-home record. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that an evaluation of incidents of children going missing from home is undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.31)

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: SC066560

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Registered provider address: Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale, Lancashire
OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Alison O'Donnell

Registered manager: Emma Fletcher

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, 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 children looked after, 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 2023