

SC066912

Registered provider: Oracle Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private provider owns and operates this home.

Inspection date: 7 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 7 August 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

The home has been without a registered manager since February 2017. A new manager took over the vacant post in November 2017 and submitted an application for registration in February 2018. Ofsted is processing this application.

A lack of effective leadership means that interim managers and senior staff have not met three of the seven requirements made at the last inspection in August 2017. The two recommendations made at that time are met. However, a further requirement and a further recommendation are made as a result of this inspection.

The majority of the staff now working in the home hold suitable diploma-level qualifications. This means that staff have the skills necessary to support young people. Relationships between staff and the young person currently living in the home are generally positive. Staff invest time and attention in these relationships. As a result, the young person feels safe and secure in the home.

Since the last inspection, the young person has made good progress in some areas of development such as education and health. Staff work in partnership with other professionals such as teaching staff and assigned therapists. Subsequently, the young person benefits from comprehensive and integrated support in these areas of development. This helps the young person to grow in confidence and self-esteem. However, staff still do not ensure that case files include all necessary documents. This shortfall potentially limits the young person's progress because staff do not have access to all relevant information. Subsequently, the internal care and support plans that staff devise do not take into account all of the young person's needs.

There have been no incidents of the young person going missing from the home since the last inspection. The young person is generally settled in the home. The use of physical restraint continues to reduce and staff only use this measure of control as a last resort. However, the young person's individual risk assessments lack clear guidance for staff. For example, when the young person displays a specific behaviour, staff may respond to this in different ways. This is because the current risk assessment does not detail the steps that staff should take to manage and reduce these risky behaviours. Subsequently, the young person receives mixed messages relating to what is acceptable behaviour. Staff have revised the section of the risk assessment relating to the use of bedroom door alarms. At the time of the last inspection, the use of this monitoring device was custom and practice in the home. Staff did not consider if, or why, the use of these alarms was necessary to safeguard young people. Staff no longer activate these alarms.

There has been one allegation of abuse since the last inspection. This allegation was not appropriately referred to all relevant agencies as required. This is because an external manager supporting this home did not provide the newly appointed manager with the correct advice and support. Subsequently, there was an unnecessary delay in the referral of this matter to the designated office for the local authority. This failure to implement safeguarding procedures correctly potentially placed the young person at risk of harm.

In the absence of a permanent manager, the review of the quality of care provided by the home is insufficient. In this document, interim managers make extensive reference to areas that they believe the service does well. However, this report does not consider the service shortfalls, young people's progress, or the detrimental impact that a lack of suitable management has on the capacity for the home to develop. Furthermore, interim managers did not devise actions plans to improve the service.

A review of the premises and the location of the home is incomplete. In this document, the new manager makes considerable reference to the risk-taking behaviours of young people who have now left the home, and not the current young person. This requirement is outstanding from the last inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
07/10/2015	Full	Good

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 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 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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	30/03/2018
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34(1)(b))	30/03/2018
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	30/03/2018
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46(1))	30/03/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery in the home and how those actions will be addressed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: SC066912

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oracle Care Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 54 Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedford MK45 4HS

Responsible individual: Mark Cole

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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