

# SC066912

Registered provider: Oracle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children aged eight to 18. Children and young people may have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and require attachment-aware, trauma-informed care and support.

The current manager successfully registered with Ofsted in July 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 16 to 17 July 2018

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 7 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 07/02/2018      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness       |
| 07/08/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 01/02/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 24/05/2016      | 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   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>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))</p>             | 14/09/2018 |
| <p>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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(d)(e))</p> | 14/09/2018 |
| <p>Subject to paragraph (5), the registered person must ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home; a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private. (Regulation 22(3)(a))</p>                                                                                                                                                   | 14/09/2018 |
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). 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)(2)(a)(3)(d))</p>            | 14/09/2018 |

## Recommendations

- Ensure that staff act as effective advocates for or on behalf of a child who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance or behaviour, as a good parent would do. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.12)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home currently accommodates one child. She benefits from bespoke one-to-one support. Staff personalise her care to meet her specific needs by incorporating her views, wishes and feelings into her support plans. This consultation and inclusion enables her to make good progress in all areas of her development.

Staff work in partnership with the child's social worker. Managers and staff now make sure that case files include all necessary information and documentation. This means that internal care and support plans replicate the longer-term aims and objectives of the placing authority.

Relationships between the child and staff are positive. Staff deliver key-work sessions that reflect identified needs. These support the child to discuss her concerns, reflect on her behaviours and celebrate her achievements.

Staff prioritise education and the organisation operates its own school. Daily routines in the home focus on supporting school attendance and attainment. The registered manager recognises that the child's current school placement no longer fully meets her learning needs. However, she has yet to take effective action to ensure that the child can access a more suitable education placement.

The organisation works in partnership with specialist health professionals, such as play therapists and family therapists. These positive working arrangements support the child's emotional well-being and development.

The child enjoys a good range of activities. These help her to develop new hobbies and leisure interests, expand her social circle and grow in confidence. Staff make sure that they establish good connections with local leisure and community resources. This means that when new children are admitted to the home, they can also benefit from access to these facilities.

The home is welcoming, comfortable and provides well-decorated and suitably maintained accommodation for children. Managers and staff endeavour to create a family atmosphere in the home. However, some institutional elements remain, such as children not having access to a telephone without reference to staff.

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

Staff use a balance of reward programmes and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. This practice supports the child to take responsibility for her own actions and behaviours and consider the impact these may have on others. When necessary, staff use physical restraint as a last resort to keep the child safe and protect her from harm. Staff complete detailed records of these events and include the child's comments. This enables the registered manager to evaluate these incidents and to appropriately review staff practice.

There have been no incidents of the child going missing from the home. Nevertheless, the registered manager ensures that staff are aware of how to respond to these events. Furthermore, the registered manager retains links with partnership safeguarding agencies and professionals should these resources be required to protect children from harm or promote their safety and well-being.

The registered manager ensures that risk assessments include the child's known risks. However, these do not always provide staff with clear guidance on how to manage challenging or risk-taking behaviours. However, this is a recording issue and such behaviours are rare. Staff work with the child to help her to reflect on her behaviours and learn alternative means of managing her anxieties.

As the home is currently only accommodating one child, staff often 'lone work'. The registered manager has put a risk assessment in place to consider the impact this working practice may have on staff safety. However, she has not considered how the child could relay any concerns she may have about the staff that care for her, at the time when she has the concern. This has the potential to isolate the child at a time of need.

The registered manager does not consistently adhere to safer recruitment procedures. Although she seeks two written references for new staff and verifies the references, the process of verification is not always robust and on one occasion the registered manager did not seek a reference for a new member staff from all relevant previous employers. This hinders the organisation's ability to appropriately assess and verify the suitability of all staff to work with children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is now registered with Ofsted. She has the skills necessary to bring stability and leadership to the home. However, there are several staff vacancies. This means that the home does not have sufficient staffing currently to provide care and support for more than one child. Furthermore, there are occasions when the staff working in the home to provide necessary cover are not fully familiar with the child's needs. This potentially impacts on the continuity of care provided by the service. The registered manager continues to work with senior managers within the organisation to consider interim strategies to address this shortfall. These include the possible

redeployment of permanent staff from other homes operated by this organisation. Consequently, meeting the child's needs remains the registered manager's priority.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision. These sessions enable the registered manager to monitor staff practice and performance. Staff currently employed in the home hold relevant qualifications for their roles. This means that staff have the skills, experience and knowledge they need to work with and support children.

The registered manager works well with families and professionals. This approach is central to practice in the home and ensures that the service meets the aims and objectives detailed in the statement of purpose. One professional said, 'The home has a really good feel about it. The staff are welcoming and friendly and the service replicates a family home.'

Improvements to internal monitoring systems are in their infancy but the registered manager prioritises this area of practice. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and is incorporating these into the next quality of care review.

The requirements made at the last inspection have been met, except for ensuring that risk assessments clearly reflect any possible impact that lone working may have on children's safety.

## **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.

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:** Rebecca Gardner

## Inspector

Jo Stephenson, 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](mailto: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 <http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018