

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 three young people aged between eight and 18 years old. Young people may have complex social and/or emotional difficulties and require attachment-aware, trauma-informed care and support.

The registered manager left on 16 August 2019. An interim manager took up post on 7 August 2019. She has the relevant qualification and has submitted an application for the registered manager's post. Given the short time that she has been in post, she has had limited opportunity to make improvements.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

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: 11 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16/07/2018	Full	Good
07/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
07/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare. (Regulation 7(1)(c)(2)(a)(i))	30/11/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; and maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to	30/11/2019

maximise the child's achievement. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi))	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding; understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being; that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(ii)(iv)(c))	30/11/2019
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))	30/11/2019
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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.	30/11/2019

(Regulation 13(1)(b)(2)(d)(e))	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(1)(3)(a)(b))	30/11/2019
After consulting with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; ensure, by means of fire drills and practice at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedures to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(d))	23/10/2019
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; or 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))	30/11/2019

Recommendations

- The statement of purpose is of particular importance to this standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a 'statement of purpose' (regulation 16 and schedule 1). The home's statement of purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. The information set out in the statement of purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 14 and 15, paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that the statement of purpose accurately reflects the staff structure and staffing levels.

- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3). In particular, the children's guide and the home's development plan require reviewing and updating to reflect the staff structure and changes in the home.

Inspection judgements

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

There are currently two children living in the home. Although children make some good progress, this is not always maintained.

Staff understand some of the children's emotional vulnerabilities. Staff give children praise and show them appropriate affection. This has helped some of the children to develop positive relationships with the staff.

Children's educational progress is poor. Despite staff recognising that children's education has deteriorated, little work has been done to escalate concerns to the children's placing local authorities.

When children refuse to attend routine health care appointments, staff do not find new ways to help children overcome their fears. Instead, staff keep rebooking appointments without addressing the cause of the ongoing refusal.

Children benefit from attending regular therapeutic sessions. For example, one child has developed new coping skills to manage their emotions. This has helped to reduce the number of incidents involving this child.

Staff regularly consult children through key-working sessions. This support helps children to express their views, wishes and feelings. However, staff do not apply the same level of support to enable children to raise complaints about their care. This compromises children's ability to raise concerns.

Staff help children to stay in touch with their families and friends. This enables children to rebuild important relationships.

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

The registered manager has not ensured that risk assessments accurately reflect the level of risk that children face. This leaves staff without all the necessary information that they require to enable them to keep children safe.

Staff do not do enough to understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. For example, staff do not use restorative work to help children to understand the impact that their behaviour can have on others. Also, staff do not have clear written guidance on how to support children to behave positively. For example, children's behavioural plans contain conflicting information.

Managers have failed to give sufficient attention to the safe recruitment of the staff who

work at the home. For example, managers have not ensured that references are verified before a member of staff starts to work in the home. This means that managers are not assured that all people who work at the home are safe to do so.

Staff do not work with children on all areas of concern as outlined in children's individual care plans. For example, staff do not always follow up issues relating to child sexual exploitation, internet safety, fire risks and personal health. This does not promote children's health, welfare and safety.

Staff respond well when children go missing from the home. They act quickly to try to locate the children, and work well with the police and the placing authority to reduce risks and consider ways to prevent children from going missing again.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Poor leadership and ineffective monitoring mean that managers do not identify and act on shortfalls to improve children's safety, progress and experiences. As a result, managers do not fully understand the strengths and needs of the home and the impact that the quality of care has on children.

Several staff changes have disrupted children's relationships with staff and have resulted in children's welfare being compromised. There has been an over-reliance on staff from other homes in the company to cover vacancies. This continuous pattern of having unfamiliar staff in the home has significantly compromised the potential for children to receive care from a consistent and stable staff team. Staff who are less familiar with the home have failed to recognise early signs of risk and to intervene soon enough. As a result, children have gone missing from the home more often than was the case.

Managers have been too slow in picking up health and safety concerns. Some fire doors to children's bedrooms do not fully close. The manager was quick to act regarding this shortfall and it was fully addressed within days of the inspection finishing. Fire evacuation records do not contain information on whether children have been involved in fire drills. This does not ensure that all matters relating to health and safety for children and the environment are fully considered.

The staff rota does not make it clear which members of staff are on duty and the manager is not always clear when internal staff have covered a shift. This leaves the manager with limited oversight of the workforce.

The home's statement of purpose and children's guide have not been updated to accurately reflect changes to the staff team and changes in the home.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision. As a result, staff can discuss their performance and learning needs. Staff receive mandatory training in key areas, such as safeguarding children. However, some supplementary training is not always completed by every member of staff.

Most staff do not yet hold the required level 3 diploma in residential childcare. However, this is not outside the required timescale for qualification.

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: Dawn Tattersall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Patrick McIntosh, social care inspector

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