

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC066917
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Oracle Care Limited
Registered provider address	Unit 54 Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedford, MK45 4HS

Responsible individual	Amanda Knowles
Registered manager	Michael Lloyd
Inspector	Jo Stephenson

Inspection date	03/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC066917

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Young people are potentially at risk of harm. This is because risk assessments lack sufficient strategies to reduce young people's risk-taking behaviours.
- Staff do not work effectively with young people to help them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Staff do not sufficiently promote young people's health. They do not address young people's known health needs or encourage them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Young people do not make good progress in education. Their school attendance is poor and staff do not sufficiently promote the importance of education.
- Staff do not encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions or to consider the impact that their actions may have on others.
- Managers do not work in effective partnership with all relevant external agencies. This compromises young people's care and means that their case files do not include all necessary documentation.
- Internal monitoring systems do not enable managers to evaluate effectively the quality of care provided by the service.

The children's home strengths

- The recruitment of a stable staff team means that young people begin to build suitable relationships with adults.
- Staff have regular opportunities to refresh their training. This means that staff are able to gain the skills that they need to support the young people.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(a))	09/01/2017
6. The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure that staff– (2)(b)(ii) protect and promote each child's welfare (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.	09/01/2017
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that staff– (2)(a)(iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care.	09/01/2017
8. The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff– (2)(a)(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers (iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of	09/01/2017

education, learning, training and employment (v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally (x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.	
10. The health and well-being standard The health and well-being standard is that– (1)(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being (c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	09/01/2017
11. The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that staff– (2)(a)(ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone (v) communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding.	09/01/2017
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff– (2)(a)(i) 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 (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe	09/01/2017

(iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other.	
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))	09/01/2017
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). (Regulation 45(2)(a)(3))	09/01/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to two children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2015	Full	Inadequate
24/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/12/2014	Full	Outstanding
19/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
Young people do not always receive personalised care that reflects their individual needs or promotes effectively their welfare. This is because staff do not consistently implement internal care plans to support young people. For example, the internal care plan for one young person states that staff will complete regular one-to-one sessions with the young person to address risky behaviours such as consuming alcohol. These sessions are not completed as required. This means that young people do not receive the personalised support that they need to promote their development. Furthermore, young people's case files do not include all necessary documentation or information. This means that young people do not benefit from planned or integrated care that confirms the aims and objectives of the placing authorities. Staff do not sufficiently promote education. This is because they do not create a culture in the home that supports regular attendance or challenges effectively the barriers to education that some young people face. Although young people have personal education plans in place, these do not accurately document their current education provisions or support their individual learning needs. Young people have allocated education placements but their attendance is infrequent. When young people refuse to attend, they often remain in bed for the majority of the day. In these circumstances, staff fail to persistently challenge this behaviour or promote alternative opportunities for young people to learn informally. Staff do not work with young people to help them to appreciate the importance of education. This means that young people do not fully understand the positive impact that education will have on their future training and employment opportunities. Health services provided by the organisation include commissioned therapeutic interventions to support young people's emotional and psychological well-being. These bespoke sessions enable young people to reflect on their backgrounds and learn alternative ways of managing their frustrations. However, young people's participation in these sessions is sporadic. This significantly reduces the potentially positive influence that this tailored support has on young people's personal development. Staff do not encourage young people to maintain healthy lifestyles. For example, staff are aware that some young people consume alcohol when they are away from the home. In these circumstances, staff do not challenge this behaviour effectively or provide young people with appropriate information about the harmful effects of alcohol. Furthermore, for one young person, staff have taken insufficient action to address a possible food allergy. They have failed to verify the existence of this	

allergy or adopt suitable control measures in the home to reduce the possibility of the young person experiencing an allergic reaction. This compromises young people's welfare and well-being.

Young people said that they have generally positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'I like the staff. I'm only just getting to know them but I like them all so far. I think they care.' However, staff do not use these relationships to engage young people in discussions about the care provided by the service or the content of their individual care plans. This missed opportunity means that young people's views and wishes are not included in their internal care plans.

Staff work with young people and their families to facilitate regular contact visits. Young people said that they appreciate this support. One young person said, 'Staff take me to see my family and this is really, really important to me.' This means that young people are not isolated from their families and that they are able to maintain these relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Staff do not always sufficiently assess or determine young people's risks or deploy suitable strategies to reduce these risks. When staff are aware that young people's behaviours away from the home are potentially harmful, they do not work with the young people to address these concerns. Staff do not undertake one-to-one sessions with young people to confront their unacceptable and risk-taking behaviours, or highlight the detrimental impact that these behaviours may have on their development. Records of one-to-one sessions show that discussions with young people are reactive and not preventative. Staff do not consistently support young people to begin to take responsibility for their own safety or for their actions. This means that young people potentially remain at risk of harm. Relationships between the young people living in the home are mixed, and at times these relationships are harmful. This is because staff do not always help the young people to resolve any conflicts that they have with each other. There are occasions when these conflicts lead to physical altercations between the young people, and staff use physical restraint or require police assistance to defuse these situations. This means that young people do not learn the skills that they need to resolve disagreements without causing harm to others. Staff do not support young people to develop socially acceptable behaviours. When young people's behaviours are undesirable or unsafe, staff do not always explain to young people why this is the case. For example, sanctions issued by staff are often	

ineffectual and do not reflect the behaviours displayed. These do not encourage young people to consider the negative impact that their actions have on their own safety or development.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home have increased slightly since the last inspection. However, staff work in partnership with local police units, and all young people have personalised 'trigger plans' in place. These plans highlight young people's specific risks and identify strategies to reduce these risks. Staff, police officers and other safeguarding professionals consider any additional risks, such as child sexual exploitation, in their assessments. This multi-agency working practice helps to promote young people's safety in these circumstances.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
An acting manager is in day-to-day charge of the home and is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted. The registered manager accepted a fixed-term temporary secondment to an alternative position within the organisation in August 2016. Since the last inspection, the registered manager and the acting manager have addressed two of the three requirements raised at that time, but they have failed to address the requirement relating to education. There is a lack of focus on meeting young people's needs. Staff practice does not consistently encourage young people to reach their full potential or create a culture that continually prioritises young people's needs. Partnership working arrangements between managers and staff and the placing authorities are fragile in some cases. This is because staff have failed to follow agreed plans, such as contact arrangements. This lack of cohesive planning means that young people do not benefit from integrated care and support, or receive consistent messages. This hinders their development. Staff receive regular supervision and these sessions are generally practice related. Managers encourage staff to identify their own training needs and appraise their performance. Training programmes are up to date and staff are appropriately qualified for their role. This means that staff have the skill and experience they need to support young people. The statement of purpose is up to date and amended when necessary. This document details the aims and objectives of the service. However, internal monitoring systems are ineffectual in enabling managers to assess the quality of care provided by the service in line with these defined aims and objectives. The registered manager and the acting manager do not sufficiently identify the	

strengths and weaknesses of the provision or consider any noted patterns and trends in their review of the home. This means that action plans are basic and that these plans do not demonstrate the capacity for improvement.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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