

SC066917

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: 8 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 26 October 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.

Managers have failed to address the four requirements made at the last inspection. Since this time, the registered manager has resigned and left the service. A new manager is now in post and is applying to Ofsted for registration. Ofsted has made a further three requirements, as a result of this inspection.

At the last inspection, young people's individual risk assessments did not include all known risks. Since this time, managers and staff have taken some steps to review these documents. For example, staff now work with young people, their families and placing authorities to identify risk factors that may be detrimental to young people's safety. However, risk assessments do not include clear strategies for staff to follow to manage and reduce these risks. As a result, there are occasions when staff practice is inconsistent. This is because staff are unsure how to best promote young people's safety and welfare.

Young people often present complex and challenging behaviours. When these behaviours place them or others at risk of significant harm, staff use physical restraint to keep young people safe. However, records of these events lack sufficient detail. For example, staff do not consistently ensure that they include young people's comments or clearly record antecedents to these events. Furthermore, on two occasions, it is unclear if the use of this measure of control was necessary or proportionate. Managers say that they are confident that physical restraint is only used as a last resort to prevent immediate harm. However, poor-quality and incomplete records mean that it is not possible to verify this statement. This potentially places young people at risk of harm. In addition, staff do not complete reflective one-to-one sessions with young people following any incidents of challenging or unacceptable behaviour. Subsequently, staff do not encourage or support young people to take responsibility for their actions and behaviours. This shortfall remains unmet from the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, some young people have been victims of bullying outside of the home. However, staff do not consistently remain alert to signs that may indicate that young people are subject to bullying or intimidation. Furthermore, when staff are aware of these incidents, they do not take sufficient action. As a result, staff do not adequately protect young people from all forms of harm.

The service remains dependent on the use of agency staff. Managers try to ensure that the agency staff they use are familiar with young people's individual needs and the day-to-day routines in the home. However, there are occasions when managers and senior staff fail to verify the suitability of some agency staff to work with young people. This is because they do not request all relevant previous employment references or evaluate any gaps in employment. Managers took immediate steps to address this shortfall during the inspection. This failure was identified at the last inspection and recruitment processes are still not good enough. This has the potential to place young people at risk of abuse or harm. In addition, staff do not have access to the staff rota and are only aware of their own work pattern. This means that senior care staff are unable to plan their shift in advance or with regard to the skills and experience of the staff who they are working with. This is a missed opportunity to provide young people with good-quality and well-planned care and support.

Staff are not always supported in their role. At the last inspection, a number of staff did not receive regular formal supervision. Although there is some improvement in this area, this is not consistent and does not include all staff. This means that managers do not effectively monitor staff practice and performance. As a result, senior managers do not address any concerns regarding staff practice in a timely manner.

Managers have failed to address the requirement from the last inspection to ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding procedures. This shortfall is potentially detrimental to promoting young people's welfare and safety.

Young people attend the organisation's own school and make some good progress in this area of their development. Staff make sure that young people benefit from

education packages that reflect their individual learning needs. This support enables young people to appreciate the importance of education.

Staff work with young people, their families and social workers to support regular and positive contact visits. As a result of this support, young people are able to continue to build suitable relationships with their families.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/10/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/02/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
17/02/2016	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
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iii)(xii)(xiii))	30/03/2018

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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii))	30/03/2018
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 staff work as a team where appropriate; and ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(b)(d))	30/03/2018
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child) or serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(2))	30/03/2018
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))	30/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30/03/2018
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 all necessary information. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i–viii))	30/03/2018

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: SC066917

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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