

SC066917

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 for up to two children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered in January 2023.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 27 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/04/2021	Full	Good
11/09/2019	Full	Good
22/01/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/07/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and three have moved out. Children settle here long term. One child lived at the home for five years, and another child lived here for two years. Staff support children to move in a planned way. Since November 2022, no children have lived in the home.

In July 2022, the home had a change of manager. This had a positive impact on children's outcomes. A child's social worker told the inspector, 'Things improved further on in the placement with a change of manager.' The independent person said that children's life chances improved and that children began to respect boundaries after the new manager was in post.

Poor-quality internal planning means that children have not always received the help and support they need. Staff have not set clear targets and goals or regularly reviewed children's progress against these. Additionally, staff have not consulted with children and encouraged them to invest in their progress by setting their own targets and goals. Lack of consultation denies children the opportunity to measure their progress and take pride in their achievements.

Staff support children to see their families and rebuild relationships. A child's social worker praised the really good communication between staff and a child's family. The same social worker praised the work of the company clinician with the family which enabled this child to move to live back home.

Staff support children's independence in an age-appropriate way. Staff supported a child to maintain part-time employment by driving him a considerable distance to and from his workplace. They supported the same child to improve his self-care skills. This enabled the child to stay in employment when they moved to live independently.

Managers ensure that the home is a homely place for children to live. Children's bedrooms are ready for them to personalise. The home is generally comfortable and well decorated. Outside areas are available for children to spend time and play. During the inspection, the inspector found that two blind cords in a child's bedroom are loose, which poses a hazard to children. A lounge has an area of damp on one wall. This is a known issue and is being addressed.

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

When incidents have occurred, managers have not critically evaluated staff practice and children's responses. As a result, children's plans have not been updated over time with strategies to support children to manage their behaviours and to reduce

known risks. Additionally, plans are not individualised. They do not include the impact on one child's behaviours of specific conditions. This means that staff have not had sufficient information to de-escalate children's behaviours effectively.

Staff have struggled to work together as a team. A lack of clear boundaries means that children have not been supported by staff to feel safe and to regulate their own emotions. Inconsistent working practices affected one child's ability to form trusting relationships with staff.

There were shortfalls in the previous manager's oversight of restraints. The inspector identified shortfalls in the evaluation process, and the effectiveness of consequences is not always documented on children's records.

The manager has taken safeguarding concerns and allegations made by children very seriously. The manager has reported concerns and followed safeguarding protocols when needed. When children were at risk of child exploitation, managers worked effectively with safeguarding agencies. Managers and staff educated children and implemented agreed strategies to keep them safe.

When children are at risk of self-harm, staff provide appropriate care and nurture to manage the situation. Consultations with clinicians and other health professionals are used effectively to improve staff practice and reduce risk.

Managers continue to ensure that the home environment is safe. A range of health and safety checks and fire safety checks are carried out to assess whether there are any hazards which could pose a risk to children. The home is a safe place for children to live.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

A newly appointed registered manager is in post. She is developing in her role and demonstrates good leadership skills. The registered manager is a strong advocate for children. A social worker praised the manager for strongly advocating for their child and supporting their wishes and feelings.

The manager is supported by the responsible individual, who has a good track record in the company. The registered manager and the responsible individual work together as a team. They are child focused and consistently consider the children's needs.

Currently, the home is not sufficiently staffed to admit children. Under the previous manager, staff received regular supervision and attended team meetings and clinical consultations. However, staff did not feel well supported. Morale was low, and practice had fallen below expected standards. As a result, staff retention has been affected. Managers recognise that when staff are recruited, they will require firm leadership and guidance to help staff to improve the quality of care that children

receive. Ongoing good-quality training and support are required to embed good practice.

Staff received a wide range of training that was specific and relevant to children's needs. Furthermore, additional workshops for upskilling staff have been delivered in clinical meetings. However, staff have not benefited from training that was specific to one child's known risks and vulnerabilities. This affected staff's ability to respond appropriately and to support the child to manage their behaviours.

Children understand how to make complaints and raise concerns about the care they receive in the home. However, on one occasion, a manager did not support a child in line with the home's internal policy and did not write to them to inform them of the outcome of their complaint.

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)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that risk assessments are regularly updated with information about children's new and emerging risks.	30 April 2023
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	30 April 2023

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that sufficient staff are recruited to safely care for children and that all staff maintain professional boundaries and working practices. Additionally, ensure that staff receive good-quality training that is relevant to children's needs.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(g)(ii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that complaints from children are considered and responded to in line with company policy.	30 April 2023
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed; that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f))	30 April 2023

This specifically relates to managers ensuring that children receive planned care and are involved in reviewing their progress and in setting new targets and goals.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)(vii)) This specifically relates to behaviour management records and evaluating the effectiveness of consequences given to children in the home.	30 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the high expectations for standards of behaviour are understood by all staff and children in the home. Children should be supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged. Poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. The development of safe, stable and secure relationships in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- The registered person should ensure that the home meets children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. Doing so, is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: Suites 1 and 5, Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Milford, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0RN

Responsible individual: David Phipps

Registered manager: Suzanne Tucker

Inspector

Karen Gillingwater, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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