

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC066917
Type of inspection	Interim
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	23/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. The acting manager remains in day-to-day charge of the home at the time of this inspection. He continues to pursue registration with Ofsted. The registered manager accepted a fixed-term temporary secondment to an alternative position within the organisation in August 2016. At the last inspection, Ofsted raised nine requirements. The acting manager has met two of these requirements but has failed to take sufficient action to address the remaining seven requirements. These significant failures place young people at risk of harm and compromise their safety and well-being. Staff do not adequately protect young people from harm. This is because they do not respond appropriately to young people's risk-taking behaviours or take suitable action to reduce these known risks. This means that staff do not promote young people's welfare. Risk assessments are generic and weak. They are not personalised to highlight young people's individual needs or risks, and fail to detail effective strategies to promote their welfare. Staff do not make sure that these documents include up-to-date or accurate information relating to young people's behaviours. The risks presented by the young people include consuming alcohol, causing damage to property, leaving the home without permission and instigating anti-social behaviour in the community. There has been no reduction in these presenting risks since the last inspection and some behaviours, such as the consumption of alcohol, have increased. On one of these occasions, the young person was in immediate and significant danger because staff failed to provide appropriate care and support. Young people do not fully appreciate the detrimental impact that some of their behaviours have on their development. This is because staff do not use one-to-one key-work sessions to help young people to understand how to keep themselves safe or to encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. This shortfall is outstanding from the last inspection. The continuing failure of the acting manager to address this area of practice means that young people do not develop a realistic comprehension of socially acceptable or expected behaviours. Young people do not believe that they are at risk of harm because staff do not challenge their	

perceptions of danger. As a result, staff do not promote young people's safety and welfare. In addition, relationships between the young people remain poor. Staff do not help young people to develop the skills they need to manage and resolve conflict with each other. This further compromises their safety.

Staff do not prioritise education or encourage young people to attend their placements. Although young people have allocated education placements, these do not provide them with full-time hours, and young people rarely attend lessons. For example, since October 2016, one young person has only had access to 30 hours of formal education. This is unacceptable and means that young people do not recognise the importance and value of education. Young people perceive their attendance in education to be optional because staff fail to address the barriers to learning that young people face. For example, when learning provisions exclude young people, staff are slow to arrange necessary meetings with key education professionals to address young people's learning needs. Furthermore, young people do not have defined educational targets or goals. This means that they are not motivated to participate in education as they can see little or no personal benefit.

Since the last inspection, staff have presented young people with key facts about maintaining healthy lifestyles. However, there is a developing acceptance among staff that some young people will regularly consume alcohol. Staff take insufficient action to prevent this behaviour. This lack of appropriate intervention means that staff do not help young people to lead healthy lifestyles.

Young people do not benefit from personalised or integrated care. This is because staff do not make sure that they have access to all necessary information. At the last inspection in November 2016, young people's case files did not include up-to-date statutory children looked after documents. The acting manager has failed to ensure that these records are now available. Subsequently, internal care plans are weak and ineffectual and do not accurately reflect young people's individual needs or the expectations of the placing authorities. This hinders young people's progress and development.

The acting manager has taken steps to build professional relationships with placing authorities and other agencies. Since the last inspection, he has liaised weekly with placing authorities to provide allocated social workers with updates on young people's progress and behaviour. One social worker said, 'Communication between all of us is better than it was and the manager has taken a lead on this.' This improvement means that placing authorities are now more aware of the behaviours presented by the young people.

Staff now seek young people's views and thoughts relating to the quality of care provided by the service. The acting manager has revised the content of young people's weekly meetings. The structure of these meetings now encourages young people to express their opinions and to suggest any areas for improvement. This increases the potential for young people to be involved in the development of the home. However, the acting manager has yet to complete an adequate review of

the quality of care provided by the home, and make this review available to Ofsted as required. Although there are some minor improvements to internal monitoring systems, to date, these improvements have failed to identify sufficiently the practice shortfalls in this provision. As a result, the acting manager does not have a clear vision for the development of the service and has not defined the actions necessary to make sure that young people receive better care and support.

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 company owns and operates this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement
03/11/2015	Full	Inadequate
24/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/12/2014	Full	Outstanding

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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; and (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.	14/04/2017
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 education, learning, training and employment; (v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; and (x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.	14/04/2017
10. The health and well-being standard	14/04/2017

The health and well-being standard is that– (1)(c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	
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; and (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.	14/04/2017
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; and (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other.	14/04/2017
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 keep them up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	14/04/2017

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))	14/04/2017
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What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 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.

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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