

SC372117

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people.

Specific work with the children and young people is personalised, enhancing the opportunity for the development of each child or young person who may have been psychologically damaged by events in their lives.

The manager has been registered for this home since August 2016.

The inspection was brought forward to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/05/2017	Full	Good
05/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2016	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 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 must comply within the given timescale.

Requirement	Due date
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person 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))	19/10/2018

Recommendations

- Some records may be kept electronically (regulation 38) provided that this information can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from individualised care that is already planned at the time of referral. For example, the registered manager and staff ensure that they talk to professionals, parents and foster carers before the children arrive at the home. This helps to ensure that the children's needs are understood and that plans are in place to meet their needs.

Children who have lived in the home for some time or moved on from the home, and those who have recently arrived, continue to make good progress. This is because of the individualised care the children receive and the nurturing care the staff provide. Because of this, the children are growing in confidence and learning to manage their own behaviour very well.

It is evident that the children enjoy good relationships with the staff. The staff are good role models and they provide the children with good advice, support and guidance. Meaningful project work between the children and staff underpins their plans and strengthens the children's confidence and sense of belonging in the home.

A child told the inspector that they judge this to be an outstanding home. This is because she feels that the home has given her the chances that her other placements did not. A child's parent has written in a feedback questionnaire: 'Thank you, we could have not achieved this without your [staff] help. We will truly be ever in your debt. We got our boy back.'

The children told the inspector that they feel listened to. They influence decision-making, contributing to purchases for the home, as well as menu and activity planning. It is evident from the records kept in the home that the children's views, wishes and feelings are listened to and acted on.

The children's physical and emotional health has improved. This is because the staff have made sure that the children receive services to meet their specific needs. The children are being supported to live more healthy lifestyles.

The children have regular direct therapy with trained professionals from within the organisation to meet their needs. The staff understand the therapy model of care used, and they work in partnership with the therapists. This early intervention benefits the children as they do not have to wait for external services to meet their needs.

The children enjoy a range of leisure activities and their individual interests are encouraged. One child has joined a drama school and another child enjoys baking. The staff encourage the children to develop their talents and skills. This approach increases the children's self-esteem.

Staff are ambitious for the children and they support them to do well in education.

One child continues to attend school regularly and is achieving. The registered manager has challenged a placing authority to ensure that one child's education provision is increased from part-time to full-time. Despite the efforts of the registered manager, a school in the local area has yet to be identified by the placing authority.

Staff are proactive, and they encourage and facilitate safe contact for the children with family and significant others. When contact restrictions apply, the staff support the children to maintain letterbox communication with their families.

Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the decoration and furnishings in the home. The home provides the children, staff and visitors with a homely, warm and welcoming environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The children have a safe place to live. They told the inspector that they feel safe in the home. The staff understand the children's vulnerabilities. The children have detailed individualised risk assessments that are regularly updated. Known risks are thoughtfully and safely managed in partnership with other professional agencies.

Staff recognise that the children need some risk in their lives, and they encourage and support safer risk. For example, the children who are working towards independence have more agreed time away from the home and they know the arrangements for the staff to collect them.

The inspector was aware during this inspection visit that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. Actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection visit, to inform the inspector's judgements.

Safeguarding concerns are taken seriously, and the registered manager and staff ensure that action is taken to ensure that the children are safe. The details of investigations, chronologies and the conclusions reached are clearly documented. However, on one safeguarding occasion concerning a child, placing social workers felt that there was an unnecessary delay in communication from the staff in the home. As a result, a requirement is made.

Since the last inspection, some children have gone missing from the home. Records and discussions with staff demonstrate that a consistent response is taken in these circumstances. This includes following the children and encouraging them to return home. Return home interviews are in place for each incident and have provided valuable information. The children's willingness to disclose friends' names and addresses has led to agreed arrangements. Because of this, missing-from-home incidents have significantly reduced.

Behaviour management strategies are personalised to each child. The children

respond to agreed rewards and incentives for good behaviour. The staff use this successfully, rather than use sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. There are clear expectations and boundaries that provide the children with positive structure and daily routines. Restraint of children is rare. When physical intervention has been used, records show this to be for less than a minute. The records show debriefs with the children and the staff, and the registered manager has commented on the appropriateness of the action taken by staff.

Staff work well with the children on an individual basis. They support them to make informed decisions that help them to reduce their risk-taking behaviours. For example, young people engage in meaningful project work with the staff and this helps them to learn how to keep themselves safe. Areas of work completed with the children include self-harm, smoking, exploitation and healthy relationships.

All required health and safety checks, including those relating to fire safety, take place regularly. This ensures that the children and the staff live and work in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has ambition and high expectations for the children in her care. She is qualified, and is knowledgeable about the children and supportive of her staff team. A suitably experienced team leader ably supports the registered manager. There is currently one staff vacancy that is in the process of being filled to maintain the appropriate staffing levels in the home.

The staff receive guidance from the registered manager and team leader on a day-to-day basis and through informal and formal supervision. There is a suitable staff training programme, and the registered manager supplements this with workshops at team meetings about areas of practice. The staff team is competent and consistent in its approach to the care of the children.

Safer recruitment practice helps to safeguard against unsafe adults working in the home. Disclosure and barring service checks are completed, and references from previous employers are obtained and verified.

However, recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff are areas for improvement. As a result, a recommendation is made. This is because some new applicants' interview notes are lacking detail. The staff supervision notes, which are kept electronically, were not available for inspection. And while staff appraisals have been completed, some do not include objectives for the staff to achieve.

The registered manager is a good advocate for the children. One child told the inspector that the registered manager supported her in her complaint against the placing authority. Because of this, the child's long-term placement in the home has been agreed by the placing authority.

The registered manager and team leader are open to scrutiny and comment, and they value the independent person reports, which are clear and comply with regulations. The registered manager's own monitoring is thorough and regular and considers the home's strengths and areas for improvement. The registered manager is not afraid to take decisive action over any issue that compromises the standard of care offered to the children.

The children contribute to their placement plan and the care records in the home. Each child has 'my time' and 'positive page' booklets showing their enjoyment and achievements in the home. Photographs and positive messages are evident in some but not all of these booklets. As a result, a recommendation is made. This is to ensure that the staff record information about the child in a way that will be helpful to the child now and in the future.

There are many examples of positive feedback received by the home. Returned questionnaires and surveys from children, professionals, parents and carers clearly evidence this. And, although the children's placing social workers expressed disappointment in communication in relation to the one safeguarding incident, they describe the care of the children as 'brilliant' and 'happy'.

The two requirements and the one recommendation from the last inspection have been met.

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: SC372117

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Karen Brandon

Registered manager: Katie Knox

Inspector

Mark Kersh, social care inspector

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