

SC372117

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

If required, children and young people can access the organisation's school and therapy department.

Inspection date: 30 January 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 23 May 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 good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

An application to increase the home's occupancy from two to three young people was granted by Ofsted in July 2017. A number of staff have been successfully recruited to accommodate this increase and a third young person was admitted in December 2017.

The manager has ensured that pre-admission information was rigorously assessed and the young person's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities were considered against

those of the young people already living in the home. The young person has been made to feel welcome and views this move as an opportunity to make a fresh start. He is intent on addressing past issues and staff have been supportive in providing good foundations to do this. They have worked closely with parents and the placing authority to make sure that plans are in place to support his aspirations, which include sitting exams in mathematics and English. With this in mind, the manager has been quick to put in place an in-house programme of learning that has been agreed with the placing authority. Education staff from the organisation's school will take responsibility for setting and marking work, which will be delivered in-house by care staff. However, given the young person's age and missed learning, it is questionable whether this level of support, in particular relating to mathematics and English, will be enough to facilitate the extent of learning required to sit exams in this academic year.

The home is managed effectively by a suitably experienced and qualified manager. She has a good understanding of the home's strengths and maintains good oversight of the implementation of each young person's care plan. She provides solid leadership to a staff team which shows resilience, and which is becoming increasingly confident and effective in its approach. For example, a recommendation was raised at the previous inspection following concerns regarding some staff's decision-making when faced with challenging behaviour. This did, on occasions, result in young people assaulting each other and/or a need for police support. More positively, incidents of assault have reduced because staff are more effective in their efforts to intervene early and de-escalate interactional issues between young people. The manager has reinforced expectations of staff to utilise their training and not rely on police involvement. On the one occasion that the police have been called, the manager has scrutinised the incident and taken stern action to address practice shortfalls.

Action has been taken to address two further recommendations raised. Staff are now consistent in their efforts to verify the identity of visitors coming into the home by ensuring that they present proof of identity and sign in to the visitors' book. Staff handovers are better organised and more purposeful. This ensures that staff coming on duty are fully aware of issues from the previous shift as well as forthcoming plans for the day.

Two requirements were made at the previous inspection. Regulation 44 reports better evidence how the independent visitor has sought to gather young people's views, although the extent of their engagement is variable and there is sometimes an under-representation of stakeholder views. The manager is working with the responsible individual who is taking action to improve this.

There is a much-improved attitude and approach to promoting a routine that reinforces the expectations that young people engage in education. Unfortunately, this has had minimal impact on one young person who continues to have very low levels of engagement in either formal education or the alternative timetable delivered by care staff. The manager continues to work with education professionals in her efforts to overcome barriers to participation and has explored almost all options in this respect. She is aware that decisive steps may need to be taken if matters do not improve, as

currently this young person will leave without the qualifications they need to give them a good start in adult life.

Young people's care is well planned. The manager and staff maintain cohesive links with key people, including parents and a range of health, social care, safeguarding and education professionals and agencies. This promotes a coordinated approach to meeting each young person's known and emerging needs.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of each young person's needs, behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities, which are captured in their respective records. These records are regularly reviewed by the manager, who maintains good evidence of young people's experiences and the progress they make, which on the whole is good. However, the manager has failed to obtain an up-to-date copy of the placing authority care plan following the most recent admission. There is evidence that she has chased this with the social worker but has not escalated concerns regarding this delay within the placing authority.

Young people raised no concerns about their care. High levels of supervision are underpinned by good, well-thought-out risk-management strategies. This ensures that young people are protected and supported to stay safe.

One young person's propensity to cause damage has had a significant impact on the standard of accommodation in the home, which requires improvement. Communal areas are austere and there is a lack of soft furnishings and pictures, which have either been damaged or removed for safety. One young person's bedroom is particularly bad and contains graffiti, damage to the walls and ceiling and broken furniture. Every effort is made to repair the damage and replace furniture, but this is recognised as a challenge, given its frequency and extent. The manager has an improvement plan in place but this needs to be expedited quickly if standards of good are to be maintained.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/05/2017	Full	Good
05/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
21/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(2)(c)(i)) In particular, ensure that the home is made to feel homely by repairing all outstanding damage, including the redecoration and refurbishment of all areas requiring improvement. Also, damaged items, such as furniture, crockery, pictures and soft furnishings, should be replaced.	06/03/2018
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority. (Regulation 8(2)(a)(vii)) In particular, consider whether the young person's aspirations to acquire qualifications in mathematics and English can be realised without the direct teaching from qualified teachers.	06/03/2018

Recommendations

- Where the placing authority does not provide the input and services needed to

meet a child's needs during their time in the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8). This is with particular reference to escalating concerns if the placing authority does not provide an up-to-date copy of the placing authority care plan.

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: SC372117

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Karen Brandon

Registered manager: Katie Knox

Inspector

Paul Scott, social care inspector

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