

SC389698

Registered provider: Oracle Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The organisation provides a registered school.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 June 2017

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: 10 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- There is a dedicated staff team that knows and understands the children's individual needs and the reasons why they are in care.

- The children know how to complain. They have the opportunity to sign and comment to say that they are happy with the outcome.
- The staff understand the importance of creating and recording memories for the children of their time living in the home.
- The children say that they feel safe living in the home. They say that they can talk to staff if they are worried or upset.
- Staff are consistent with their boundaries and challenge any inappropriate behaviours.
- Staff understand the importance of contact for children and their families. They facilitate contact in line with the social worker's care plan.
- There is good communication between the children's schools and the staff in the home.
- Staff understand the importance of recognising and celebrating children's achievements.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Not all of the staff have completed their national vocational qualifications within the required timescale.
- Not all of the fire doors are self-closing. This needs addressing as a matter of urgency.
- The staff attend regular meetings with the organisation's clinician. However, the notes are not sent to the manager in a timely way, to ensure that staff are working in a consistent manner.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2017	Interim	Not judged
20/10/2016	Interim	Not judged
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/06/2015	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 registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma') or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma. The relevant date is, in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls two years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or, in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32(2)(a), (3)(b), (4)(a)(b), (5)(a)(b))	10/10/17
To meet the fire precautions regulation, the registered person must ensure that they take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) This relates to some fire doors not self-closing.	31/07/17

Recommendations

- The registered person should keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8) This is with regard to following meetings with the organisation's clinician to ensure that the notes are sent to the manager in a timely way, to ensure that staff are working in a consistent manner.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home recently reopened in March 2017 after a period of being closed.

The children have individualised placement plans which are regularly reviewed and updated. The plans support the staff to work with the children in a consistent manner. The children have a child-friendly placement plan which they have the opportunity to comment on and sign. The children understand their plan and how the staff are supporting them during their time in the home. Placement plans are sent to social workers for signing and to ensure consistency. A social worker commented that the plans were comprehensive and of good quality.

The staff undertake regular key-work sessions with the children and cover a wide variety of topics. These sessions are informative and are recorded in a way which makes it easy for the children to understand. The children have the opportunity to comment, sign and agree on the actions. This means that key-work sessions are meaningful for the children.

The staff are proactive in recognising and celebrating children's achievements in a variety of ways, from verbal praise to an activity such as going out with staff for coffee. One child has a reward chart from the school regarding her behaviour. Staff are supporting the child by giving her extra points when she achieves ten points from the school, which she is saving towards getting a mobile phone. The staff support and encourage the children while working alongside other professionals.

The staff understand the importance of building memories for the children of their time in the home. The children have individual albums containing photos of activities, both in the home and in the community, and of special occasions. The staff understand the importance of children being able to keep special items, such as tickets to events, a favourite teddy, or other items which could get mislaid during their stay. They have spoken to the children about getting chests in which they can put their keepsakes.

The staff recognise the importance of maintaining family contact and facilitate this to take place in line with the social worker's care plan. Staff record phone contact with the parents in order to evaluate and inform the social worker regarding the impact on the children.

The children have begun to develop good, trusting relationships with the staff. The children commented that they like the staff and they can talk to them if they are worried or upset and staff will help them. Good interactions were observed during the inspection between the children and the staff, and appropriate humour and banter was used. However, when spending time with the children, they both commented that they were upset that a member of staff is being moved to another house for a period of time. A child commented, 'I am really sad that one of the best staff is moving. I will miss her and I don't think it's fair.' Another child commented that she was worried that the member of staff would not come back. This shows that the children have begun to make meaningful and safe relationships in a short space of time, and that moving staff can

have a detrimental effect on the children.

The staff promote and support the children's health needs. Both of the children are registered with the local doctor, dentist and opticians and have had initial health checks. Staff support children to attend external support from outside agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services. The staff promote healthy eating and ensure that the children have the opportunity for exercise by visiting the local park.

The children are supported in developing their independence in line with their age, understanding and ability. The children are encouraged to keep their bedrooms and the house tidy, bring down their washing and help staff cook and prepare some meals. The children both commented that they enjoy baking with staff and have learned how to make cookies. Although the children are young, it is important that they begin to learn some independence skills.

The staff understand the importance of education and support and encourage the children to attend. Both of the children attend full-time education. Communication with the education professional is effective and consistent. The education provider commented, 'She is new to the school. We had a bumpy start, but the staff are really supportive, and communication is good. This has helped her to feel a bit more settled. Staff attend any meetings that we call and are fully involved.'

Both of the children have recently moved into the home. The staff understand that transitions for children can be difficult. The staff worked with one child on a one-to-one basis, spending time to get to know her and support her with the move into the home. Another child, due to the need to move quickly, did not have the opportunity to visit the home. The staff ensured that they prepared the child already living in the home of the new admission the following day. The staff understand that children moving into the home can impact on current children in placement.

Sanctions are fair and proportionate and given appropriately. Both positive and negative behaviour is recorded and monitored. The children have the opportunity to comment and sign each entry. The children gain an understanding of any consequences they have received and develop skills to reduce negative behaviours. A social worker commented, 'Staff are working with her consistently, which is what she needs.'

The staff and children eat together. Meal times are seen as an important part of the day, when both children and staff share news and make plans for the evening.

The home is set in a rural location. It is decorated to a good standard. Since moving in, the children have been encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and communal areas with photos, pictures and accessories. The children are proud of the home and enjoy showing off the changes that they have made. The children have begun to complete work in the garden and have made plans to complete further work with staff over the summer. A social worker commented, 'The home is lovely and welcoming and has a child-centred feel to it.'

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

The staff challenge any unwanted behaviours and reinforce boundaries. The home's clinician commented, 'The staff are working in a consistent way with the girls, this is important as it supports them in feeling safe.' The staff have reflective conversations with the children following any unwanted behaviours, which are recorded. The children have the opportunity to sign and comment on these. The staff understand the importance of the children being able to recognise, reflect and work to change unwanted behaviours.

Comprehensive risk assessments and behaviour management plans are in place. The plans outline how the risks present themselves, any strategies and agreed plan regarding behaviour management. These are regularly reviewed and amended when needed. A social worker commented, 'The staff update and send me a copy of her risk assessments. They are very tight and keep her safe. I'm very impressed.'

The children say that they feel safe. They say that the staff care about and look after them. The children say that they can talk to any member of staff if they are feeling worried or upset, and that staff would help them. Both of the children commented that they spend time with the manager after school and can talk to her if they are unhappy about anything.

There have been 14 physical interventions since March 2017 that pertain to one child. The majority of these have been very low level and consist of staff guiding the child to keep herself safe. The staff have been able to build a relationship with her and are able to defuse any potential incidents without having to resort to a full restraint. Staff have stated that there is a decrease in the child's behaviours which require physical interventions. This shows that the child has started to build more trusting relationships with staff. All incidents are appropriately recorded, and the child has been able to comment and sign these. A reflective conversation is also recorded after an incident to support the child in understanding and to manage further behaviours.

The staff understand the importance of safeguarding the children in line with the home's policy. All of the staff have completed the relevant safeguarding training and are vigilant around the children. Safeguarding is discussed in staff meetings and supervision sessions to support the staff to understand the children's vulnerabilities.

Due to the children's age and vulnerabilities, they do not have free time in the community. However, staff understand the importance of teaching them to keep themselves safe according to their age, understanding and ability and in agreement with their social workers. The children know who to report any concerns to and explained how they keep themselves safe when using the internet.

The children know how to complain. There has been one complaint from a child, which was resolved in a timely way. The manager acknowledged the complaint to the child, and the child had the opportunity to sign and comment to say that they were happy with the response.

All health and safety checks are completed by staff on a weekly and monthly basis. The

fire risk assessment was completed in October 2016 and a health and safety audit was completed in December 2016. However, the home has recently had new flooring, and this has prevented some fire doors from being able to self-close; this means that, in the event of a fire, there is the potential for the fire to spread.

There is a comprehensive children's guide in place with photographs of the staff, expectations and routines of the home, along with the contact details of outside agencies the children can contact if they do not wish to speak to staff. There is space for children to write information about themselves that they wish staff to know, such as likes and dislikes, hobbies and interests and things that are important to them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since February 2017 and has the relevant experience to manage the home. She is currently undertaking her level 5 in leadership and management. She has a clear vision of how she wants the home to develop.

Due to the home being closed, it was not judged at the last inspection. Previously, there were three requirements and three recommendations, all of which have been met. The staff receive regular practice-based supervision, where their development needs are also discussed. Staff said that they found the supervision supportive and this gives them the opportunity to discuss care practice.

There is a comprehensive induction programme, which new staff need to complete before passing their probation period. The programme supports the staff in working with the children and gives them the knowledge to support them in their role. The home has been redecorated to a good standard and children's placement plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

The staff have a good insight into the children's individual needs. Key workers are knowledgeable about the children they work with and are able to disseminate this knowledge to the team. Communication between social workers and the staff is excellent. A social worker commented, 'I am kept updated about everything and receive monthly reports, which are informative. I get sent copies of placement plans and risk assessments.'

Recruitment is robust, and staff cannot begin to work in the home until all checks have been received and verified.

There is adequate staffing in the home. The manager works some evenings and weekends to build relationships with the children. The staff cover any gaps in the rota to ensure that only staff who know and understand the children's individual needs are working with them. This further safeguards children.

The manager monitors care practice on a weekly and monthly basis and tracks the children's progression. She uses reports from the independent visitor as part of her monitoring systems and to help drive improvement.

There are regular staff meetings, which support the staff working with the children. These meetings are well recorded; this means that, if staff miss any meetings, the

minutes are clear and informative.

There are regular clinical meetings to support the staff working with the children. The staff commented that they found these meetings to be supportive. The clinician commented, 'Staff are eager to learn about how they can support children, understand their behaviours and work with them to support them to be able to move forward.' However, the clinical notes are not sent to the manager in a timely way, which means that the staff may not be working in line with the clinician's recommendations. This could lead to staff not working consistently with children.

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 difference 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 who 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: SC389698

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: Louise Jones

Inspector

Trish Palmer, social care inspector

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