

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	29/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC389698
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Oracle Care Limited
Registered person address	Unit 54 Wrest Park, Silsoe, BEDFORD, MK45 4HS

Responsible individual	Mr Steven Bromley
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Angie Bishop

Inspection date	30/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC389698

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The home does not have a registered manager and until recently has not had effective management provision. This has led to instability in the staff team. Improvements have commenced with the appointment of an experienced manager.
- Ofsted were not notified of a new manager being appointed to the home.
- Staff have not received timely and appropriate supervision during the absence of a registered manager; this has led to a lack of investment in the care staff deliver.
- The current staff team are new to this home and the young person living in the home receives adequate care which continues to be characterised by inconsistencies
- Some staff have not received training to enable them to fully comprehend the experiences of the young person in the home.
- Activities are available to the young person in the home, however, these are not varied enough in nature. Consequently, the young person has not been introduced to new life and learning experiences.
- The young person is not in full time education and staff do not engage him in purposeful learning activities within the home.
- Record keeping in the home does not consistently explore the young person's wishes and views, this means their contribution to decision making is unclear.
- Management review and debrief with young people and staff following incidents of physical restraint is inconsistent. This limits the effective monitoring of the measures staff use.
- Staff do not support young people to produce a record of experiences, this limits the opportunity for them to build memories in permanent form.

The children's home strengths

- A permanent manager commenced employment on the 11 May 2015; she confirms her intention to register with Ofsted. She has quickly identified areas of improvement and proposals to improve young people's experience of the provision. She has a clear development vision for the home.
- The new staff team are starting to build relationships with the young person in the home and the quality of these relationships is improving since the last inspection.
- The young person has made significant progress both socially and emotionally relative to his starting point in this home. This has enabled him to regulate his responses to adults and young people and develop and maintain peer relationships outside of the home.
- Staff promote contact with family members and the manager supports the involvement of family in planning for the young person.
- The home now has its own dedicated staff team and is no longer staffed by temporary staff or those from other homes within the organisation.
- Following a period of disruption in staffing and an unplanned move for one young person at the time of the last inspection, a decision has been made by the manager not to accept new admissions.

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/s 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(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard: To meet the children's wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure children receive care from staff who: (1) (a) develop positive relationships with them; (b) engage with them; and (c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) ensure that staff— (i) ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; (iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care	02/09/2015
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; (ii) support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any	30/09/2015

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	
11. The positive relationships standard: In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person is required to ensure that staff: (2) (ix) understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; (x) are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same	03/08/2015
The registered person must give, without delay, HMCI notice of the appointment of a person to manage the home, the name of the person so appointed and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (2)(a)(b))	13/07/2015
The registered person must give notice to HMCI of any continuous period of absence of the registered manager for a period of 28 days or more. Except in the case of an emergency or unforeseen absence a notice under paragraph (1) must be given no later than one month before the proposed absence commences, or within such shorter period as may be agreed with HMCI and specify with respect to the proposed absence its length or expected length; the reason for it; the arrangements which have been made for running the home during the absence; the address, name and qualifications of the person who will be responsible for the home during the absence and in the case of the absence of the registered manager, the arrangements that have been, or are proposed to be, made for appointing another person to manage the home during the absence, including the proposed date by which the appointment is to be made. (Regulation 48 (1)(2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))	13/07/2015
The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of a measure of restraint, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so, has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about	07/07/2015

the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Young people should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia specifically to support young people's understanding of this part of their life journey.
(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Ensure that staff foster positive relationships with young people in the home based on jointly undertaken activities, shared daily life, domestic and non-domestic activities and established boundaries of appropriate behaviour.
(The Guide to the Quality Standards, Page 6, Residential Childcare, Key Principles)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; The organisation provides a registered school around which its homes in this area are based.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
14/11/2014	CH - Full	Good
12/09/2013	CH - Full	Adequate
24/07/2013	CH - Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires Improvement
There is currently one young person living in this home. The home is appropriately furnished and damage to the home has been repaired since the last inspection. The young person has moved bedrooms and has personalised his new room. The home has a large garden, which the young person uses to play ball games. Following a period of unstable staffing and the absence of a manager, the young person is now able to begin to build relationships with his caregivers. This is in its infancy and the team require a period of stability to develop and consolidate their unified approach to care. The staff team deliver care that is adequately able to safeguard the young person. In the absence of a manager since the last inspection, the views of young people have not been formally sought and their wishes and feelings are only sometimes evident in records held in the home. There has been a recent change to staffing patterns; the young person said: 'There is nothing that I would like to be different apart from the staff rota. It has changed and they are only here for a day, which means we can't do as much, as new staff are coming on shift. I don't get as long with staff I get on with.' All staff have completed basic training however, not all staff have completed specific training to enable them to fully understand the young person's experience and life journey. Staff responses to young people are not always child focused and are at times not individual to the young person or his circumstances. Where this is the case, target setting is at times unrealistic and unachievable. Staff do not actively promote independence and the young person is overly reliant on staff. This limits the scope for him to take age appropriate responsibility and will affect his ability to move on from this home. The manager devises placement plans in conjunction with the in house therapy team, relevant professionals, and family members. These are comprehensive documents, which identify targets and review progress. Not all staff use these; the manager identifies this as an area for development. The young person has made good social and emotional progress in relation to their starting point. There is a reduction in the number of incidents involving the young person in the home, he is better able to identify his own triggers and reactive behaviours and engages more confidently with adults. He also builds and maintains	

positive peer relationships outside of the home.

Staff are confident the young person will be in full time schooling in September. A member of staff said: 'We have been gradually building up with school, we have a tutor who comes here, it is very good but the young person is not interested. Sessions in school are increasing and they have started to integrate him ready for full time school.'

Not all staff actively encourage attendance at school and some lack the confidence to implement boundaries in respect of schooling. Some staff allow the young person to play computer console games or have free time during school hours; this is not conducive to effective learning.

The young person is positive about the care he receives in this home. He has greater contact with family members than previously and enjoys overnight stays away from the home. The manager identifies changing relationships and values the importance of significant relationships for young people. Appropriate support is available for young people to promote safe sustainment of key relationships. When asked if anything could be better in the home, he said: 'I would like more pocket money and I would like more free time.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires Improvement
The current staff team are new to this home and as a result, the young person living in the home receives satisfactory care, of which the need for improvement is identified. In conjunction with the manager, the in house therapist identifies risk factors and reviews risk management strategies. The manager and staff are better able than previously to support the young person to acknowledge his key risk areas. He is more able to engage in conversation about risk. Changes in staffing have compromised the effectiveness of plans; the manager identifies a strategy to address this issue. Since the last inspection, the use of physical intervention has been minimal. Records of restraint lack management oversight, and debriefs for the young person and staff are inconsistent. This means that the appropriateness of the interventions is not reviewed and learning from them limited. The support young people receive is of a variable quality and there are some areas where greater progress is made than others, this is largely dependent on staff training, experiences and differing approaches to care. The manager is focusing on staff training to maximise young people's opportunities and minimise the disparity	

in care. A social worker said: 'There have been problems with staffing, they did not have the background training and did not understand the young person's behaviour or his life experiences. Staff were mainly agency staff and did not have the experience, this has improved since the new manager has started.'

The young person's life journey and experience in this home is not evident in records. He has a memory box, which staff use infrequently and there is no narrative that he can use to reflect on and support his understanding of this period of his life.

Staff offer activities in and outside of the home but the young person dictates these activities. Staff are not creative at introducing new experiences, this reduces opportunities for learning. A staff member said: 'We do physical activities such as biking, basketball, walking in the woods and the young person goes out with friends he has made locally, he doesn't like to do new things.'

Relationships between the young person and staff have improved since the last inspection, where the young person was disengaged from a constantly changing staff team. The young person is developing a sense of increased emotional security in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement
The home has not had a Registered Manager since 26 January 2015. A new manager commenced employment on 11 May 2015. The registered provider failed to notify Ofsted and did not provide information in respect of the interim management arrangements. Two requirements and two recommendations are outstanding from the last inspection. The requirements relate to the provision of education and consultation with young people. The recommendations related to the supervision and appraisal of staff. These translate into new requirements following this inspection. Since the home has been without a Registered Manager there have been a number of changes within the structure of the managing organisation. Due to staffing issues, a number of staff from other homes were previously required to work in this home. Dependence on temporary staff left young people unsettled and without predictable care. The staff team is new and becoming increasingly stable. The young person said: 'It is getting better here, there are more of the same staff. I don't like one of them as much as the others but it is still better.' Supervision has been inconsistent and whilst the home has had no manager, some staff have not had supervision. This left young people vulnerable, as staff did not	

have the opportunity to discuss the difficulties related to behaviour management in the home. All staff have now had supervision from the new manager and a supervision matrix is in place to formalise the supervision and appraisals process. In the first supervisions with the new manager, she has encouraged reflection and supports staff to identify areas of improvement focused on young people's experiences. This benefits young people as they begin to become central to the improvement process.

Following the period of disruption in staffing and an unplanned move for one young person at the time of the last inspection, the new manager has made a decision not to accept new admissions at this time. This will allow a period of stability in the staffing and time to support the current young person in preparation for accepting a peer into the home. A member of staff said: 'The priority is to ensure everything is in place and the focus is on the young person with his education and social skills and the things he should be doing at his age. Hopefully we will have another young person move in when it is right for the current young person.'

The new manager undertakes effective monitoring and has quickly identified areas for improvement and takes decisive action. She has a clear development vision for the home and the service she wishes to deliver.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

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 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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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