

SC391860

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and support for up to 12 children with learning disabilities. Six children were in residence during the inspection.

The registered manager has recently left, and the deputy manager has been appointed as the manager of the home. The manager is appropriately qualified and has applied to register with Ofsted.

The provider also owns and operates a school on the same site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school/on this site.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

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: 9 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
10/10/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in their development. Children's care and behaviour support plans are informative and child-focused. Staff understand these plans well and their role in implementing them. Staff put in place achievable and realistic goals and targets. This makes them meaningful to children and helps them to see the progress they are making. For example, children develop their personal care skills and personal hygiene well. This helps children to feel proud of themselves. However, not all targets are consistently reviewed for all children. As a result, tracking measurable progress is not as clear as it could be, so this impacts on the support some children receive.

Children's day-to-day experiences are positive. Staff put in place routines and structures that help children to manage their time. Staff support activities for children on their own and with peers. This thoughtful approach enables children to have space when they need it but also time to develop social skills. Activities such as park trips and shopping, as well as meals out and visits to the local disco, are popular and enrich children's lives.

Staff know children well. This means that they can respond with sensitivity and confidence when needed, even at challenging times. After incidents, staff commit to understanding how they happened so they can apply this learning in the future to better help children. When needed, managers challenge other professionals to provide the support children need. Managers make child-centred decisions that take account of all children's needs. The commitment of managers and staff to children is commendable.

Staff and managers have excellent relationships with parents and professionals. Parents and professionals have confidence in the care staff provide to children and are pleased with children's progress. This helps children to feel supported across their lives. Therapy professionals in the attached school are complimentary about the care staff give to children. They have plans in place to support staff to deepen their understanding of children. This is because the staff have a thirst to learn more and do the best for children.

Children live in a clean and welcoming home. Communal areas are inviting spaces for children to spend time in. Staff personalise children's bedrooms to their needs, so they are comfortable and suitable spaces for them to enjoy. For example, staff have painted a beautiful mural on one child's wall that brightens their room. Furthermore, the outside areas are large and suitable safe spaces for children to enjoy. As a result, children have an appropriate area to explore and develop in.

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

The manager and staff take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They put in place informed and child-centred risk assessments. The manager and staff use their own knowledge, stakeholder input and children's experiences to identify, assess and plan to reduce risk. As a result, children experience good levels of safety planning and stability.

Complaints and allegations are rare. When these happen, staff know how to respond, and managers follow their own procedures with thoroughness and objectivity. Where needed, managers complete comprehensive investigations into allegations and take decisive action if needed. This includes ending staff's employment if necessary. A commitment to children's safety and well-being is a clear priority for all staff and managers.

Key workers regularly update children's risk assessments and plans. These include guidance for staff to complement their knowledge of children. As a result, staff have guidance to keep children safe. For one child, there is insufficient information in all relevant documents about their rescue medication. In addition, this medication is not always securely stored when not in use. Most staff know the child's needs well and as a result this shortfall in documentation has not had a negative impact on the child. However, this shortfall in guidance leaves the child and staff vulnerable.

Staff physically intervene with children if necessary. They use this as a last resort and their responses are proportionate. On a very few occasions, staff do not appear to have intervened quickly enough and they have been injured. Managers do not always reflect sufficiently at these times. As a result, they do not quickly amend specific guidance to enable staff to keep themselves and children as safe as possible. While this does not appear to have had a significant impact, it is a weakness in the system of learning around restraint and incidents. Managers are aware of this and have developed their learning since these incidents.

Children have access to the internet and this is well managed. Staff are aware of how vulnerable children are and so work hard to make internet use accessible and safe. This means that, where possible, children can take part in online activities in the same way as other children their own age.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Dedicated managers, who know the children well and have the respect of their team, lead the home with a clear vision and expertise. They are aspirational for children and genuinely want them to achieve and grow as individuals.

Management monitoring systems complement the management team's knowledge of their service which is developed through observation and spending time with children and staff. However, there are some areas where the system has not been adequate. For example, the system to ensure that staff read updates to risk assessments does not work quickly enough for managers to know this has happened

when needed. In addition, some medical records are not in place and some documents remain unsigned. While this has not had a negative impact on the child's well-being, it highlights a weakness in managers' oversight. This has the potential to leave the child vulnerable in an emergency.

Managers usually notify Ofsted about serious incidents as required. On one occasion, the formal process for this was not followed, which was an oversight. However, this incident was also not reviewed for several weeks afterwards by a manager, which reduced the immediacy of learning for all involved.

Despite some challenges in recruitment, managers ensure that there are always enough staff to care for children. Staff work extra shifts and there is a full pool of bank staff to fill any gaps in the rota. This helps children to have consistent care from adults who know them well. Managers have also amended the rota to ensure that children have more opportunities to take part in activities off site. This emphasises how the manager and staff put children's needs at the forefront of their practice.

Managers regularly provide supervision for staff. This gives staff the opportunity to talk about children, the team and their own well-being. Records are sometimes brief and actions not clear. This does not detract from the useful discussions, but records do not reflect this. Managers have already identified this as an area to develop.

Staff have access to face-to-face and online training. Training records are not clear which reduces managers' oversight of staff learning. Managers have also not yet sourced training in some areas specifically relevant to children. This means that staff do not all have the training they need to extend their practice.

Staff support children to share their views and develop their value systems as individuals. Children's views are sought through key-working sessions and staff use children's preferred communication systems. Staff pay attention to exploring culture, diversity and equality and a range of calendar events support this. For example, the home was beautifully decorated for Halloween. Children were also supported to discuss the Queen's Jubilee in meaningful ways for them. This helps to increase the children's curiosity and understanding.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, all staff should complete training specific to children's needs and records should accurately reflect this.	29 December 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure that monitoring systems identify essential documents missing from children's files. This includes consent for emergency medical treatment, children's immunisation records and other health documents. In addition, monitoring systems must identify when staff have not read essential updates to guidance about how to	15 December 2022

support children in a timely manner. Monitoring systems should also ensure that training records help managers to identify gaps in staff training.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1)) In particular, the manager must ensure that medicines are correctly stored, and children's risk assessments and plans include information about health conditions and medication.	15 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that incidents are reviewed in a timely way so that learning from them can be identified quickly and shared appropriately. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should review incidents of restraint and identify where practice guidance could be amended to better guide staff in their use of physical intervention. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that the quality of supervision records is of a good standard and clearly show actions to be completed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC391860

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Katherine Bridon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector
James Tallis, Social Care Inspector

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