

# SC407783

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is run by a national private organisation and provides accommodation linked to a school. The home provides care for up to five children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

There has been no registered manager since 15 December 2023. The current manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 4 June 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 04/06/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 27/06/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 20/09/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 05/05/2021      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children share positive and emotionally warm relationships with staff, who are attentive to their individual needs, wishes and feelings. Staff are dedicated and show genuine care to the children. They have developed an understanding of the children's unique identities, lived experiences and family stories. As a result, children feel valued, understood and well cared for. One child recently nominated staff for an award stating, 'They care a lot. They help us when it's needed. I feel safe going to them. I love and appreciate them so much.'

All three children are in education. One child is now accessing school on a full-time basis, which they had not done for several years before moving to the home. The two other children are now in their second year of college and both doing well in their chosen subjects.

Children's basic health needs are generally well attended to by staff. However, two children are not taking medication as prescribed. Leaders and staff had made some attempts to engage with relevant professionals about this. Nevertheless, the arrangements in place for when children refuse to take medication are inconsistent. As a result, some children have not taken their prescribed medication for several months and leaders are not clear on the potential consequences of this.

Children are supported to attend activities and explore interests in the community. This helps children to develop as individuals and build friendships outside of the home. Staff actively support children to maintain these relationships and encourage children to bring their friends to the home. This gives children a sense of ownership and connection to their home. It also helps staff to better understand children's strengths and vulnerabilities when in the community.

Staff recognise the importance of children spending time with their families. They work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that children visit and maintain contact with their family where appropriate. This helps children to remain connected to those who matter most to them.

Children's moves into the home are well planned and sensitively managed. The views of all children are central to these plans and there is a heavy focus on the pace for the child in this context. This helps reduce children's anxieties and allows children to start to build relationships prior to their arrival. However, the initial assessments carried out by leaders do not always consider how children's life experiences may impact on their compatibility with other children.

Arrangements for children moving out of the home are equally positive and moves are well planned, supported by strong independence work. Children who have left the home maintain contact with staff and are often invited to take part in celebrations. This

supports children's trust in their relationship with staff. However, one child who lives at the home as part of an education placement is due to leave imminently and they have no clear plan for accommodation or support when they leave. Leaders have not liaised effectively with the child's local authority or provided sufficient challenge in relation to the child's next steps. Further, this child had not been signposted to advocacy services or the Children's Commissioner, so is not aware of their rights or what support is available to them.

The physical environment of the home is of a high standard. The communal spaces have lots of photos on display and children's bedrooms are personalised to their taste.

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

Children share positive relationships with a stable staff team, full of kindness and good humour. As a result, children feel safe and know they can share any concerns they have with staff, and they are confident these will be acted on.

Staff have a secure understanding of children's individual vulnerabilities and what is needed to help them keep safe. Although staff are guided by clear risk management plans, these are not consistently updated or fed into by relevant documents.

Leaders and staff role model positive communication and behaviour management strategies, which help children to better understand their own feelings. Physical intervention is not used in this home. This is a significant change for two of the children, who before moving into the home had experienced numerous physical interventions.

When children make allegations, managers respond swiftly and engage with appropriate safeguarding agencies. However, there is a lack of clarity around interim arrangements to manage risk following an allegation being made. Furthermore, when a new safeguarding concern is raised in an existing allegation investigation, this is not dealt with robustly. On one occasion, this resulted in a child being cared for by a member of staff they had made an allegation about. However, the child was not negatively impacted by this. There was meaningful follow-up work and relationship rebuilding between the child and staff member once the allegations had been investigated.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There has been no registered manager for a significant period. Leaders have not taken urgent action to identify a suitably qualified individual to oversee the day-to-day running of the home. This has resulted in a sustained period of inconsistent management oversight which has led to shortfalls. This is also reflected in parental feedback.

The previous registered manager left the home in December 2023. A new home manager was appointed in August 2024. However, there has been a delay in the manager's application to be registered, due to matters beyond their control. This means that Ofsted is yet to fully assess their suitability. However, an application has now been submitted.

The home manager speaks warmly of the children and has a core belief that children can achieve well in life. Although the manager has clear aspirations for the home, these are not reflected in up-to-date development plans.

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in the home's responsible individual. The current responsible individual has been in post since September 2024. They are also the responsible individual for nine other homes, as well as having a more senior role within the organisation. This limits their capacity to supervise the home effectively. As a result, leaders have not ensured that the responsible individual has full capacity to fulfil the required responsibilities.

The manager and responsible individual's monitoring systems are ineffective. There are various shortfalls that they had not identified, for instance, ensuring that children's plans are up to date and that relevant records are available. One child has no local authority records available in the home to help inform planning. These important records had not been seen or considered by leaders at the point of admission and so plans created by staff do not fully identify or address the needs of this child. While staff had challenged the local authority, this was limited and had not been escalated by the manager or responsible individual.

Staff speak positively about their roles and say they feel well supported by the manager. Staff now receive regular supervision and have annual appraisals. However, the quality of staff supervision is inconsistent and does not afford staff the opportunity to review practice, particularly around safeguarding. While the staff and manager are clear about their responsibility to keep children safe, they lack confidence in how to respond to safeguarding concerns because these are not commonplace in the home.

Three members of staff have not attained the relevant level 3 qualification within the required timescales. Leaders and the responsible individual are aware of this and are taking action to address this.

The manager has successfully embedded a culture in the home where equality and diversity are recognised, respected and welcomed. This is reflected in the staff team and the interactions they have with the children day to day. This supports children to feel safe and free to explore their own sense of self.

## 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, The 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       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that there are suitable management arrangements and effective monitoring systems in place.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p> | 12 August 2025 |
| <p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 12 August 2025 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding.</p> <p>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children's medication is administered as prescribed and that timely medical advice is sought if a child refuses the medication.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice.</p> <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(iv)(ix))</p> | 12 August 2025 |
| <p>An organisation may only carry on a home if—</p> <p>each director of the organisation, except for a director who is the responsible individual, who is involved in the carrying on of a home by that organisation satisfies the requirements in paragraph (6).</p> <p>A responsible individual must—</p> <p>have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 12 August 2025 |

(Regulation 26 (4)(i) (7)(b))

In particular, leaders must ensure that the responsible individual has the capacity and scope to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children know and understand their rights. In particular, children should have the opportunity to share their views, wishes and feelings with an advocate and be given details of how they can contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.19)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the home. In particular, that staff supervision is of good quality and staff, as a team and as individuals, develop their skills and knowledge in this area. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.8 and 9.14)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce plan in place that is regularly reviewed and is in line regulation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

## 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:** SC407783

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Aspris Children's Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** 2 Barton Close, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicester LE19 1SJ

**Responsible individual:** Michelle Garstang

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Becky Paradise, Social Care Inspector

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