

# SC407790

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 privately owned. It is one of several homes owned by the provider in the local area and is linked to an independent school that is operated by the same organisation. The home provides care for up to five children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2021.

### Inspection dates: 13 and 14 January 2025

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

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

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 14 February 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 14/02/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 04/01/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 17/11/2021      | Full            | Good                 |
| 14/01/2020      | Full            | Outstanding          |

## Inspection judgements

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

Each of the children were spoken to during the inspection when they returned home from school. The children routinely find the manager and have a hug on their return home and she and the staff ask about their day. The home bustled with the children's excitement as they planned their evening together, of a meal out.

Children make significant progress from their starting points. All the children have made good progress, and staff are sensitive to children's individual needs when tailoring the goals to the child. Staff have created a loving and nurturing home, which has formed a secure base from which children can achieve.

Some children have experienced extended periods out of education before moving to the home. All the children now have good attendance rates, which have been maintained since the last inspection. One child has received a certificate recognising his high attendance. School staff credit the work of the manager and her team in this success. Children are becoming more confident and aspirational for themselves in the learning space because of living in this home.

The manager and the staff team take great pride in the children and the home. The manager and staff speak enthusiastically and with love when talking about each of the children. Their needs and the labels that may be assigned to their behaviours are secondary to the person they describe. One parent described the manager as providing 'motherly love' when they cannot be there and said that this puts their mind at ease.

Children said that they enjoy living in the home, and each child can name several members of staff as their 'go to' person should they need anything.

Children participate in a range of activities and clubs outside of the home. They are also encouraged to be part of the household and cook dinner for the other children and staff. Staff encourage independence skills, and children routinely partake in the weekly shopping trip.

Children's cultural needs are met. However, there are aspects of their cultural needs that could be better supported. For example, one child has expressed an interest in attending church, which has been facilitated by one member of staff. Currently, not all members of staff have the skills and knowledge to be able to meet this need confidently as the child explores his identity and faith. Similarly, another child has European heritage. While not wanting to explore this at present, staff should be building their own knowledge and skill set should this change in the future to help the child build a positive sense of self.

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

There have been few incidents in the home since the last inspection. The single incident of a child going missing from the home was well responded to, with staff immediately following on foot and contacting the police when they lost sight of him. The child was warmly welcomed back into the home when he returned, and conversations were held with him about what had happened in a timely and sensitive way.

There has been one incident of restrictive practice in a two-year period. Unfortunately, and on reflection by the manager and staff team, this could have been avoided. The leaders and managers were swift in their action to review and learn from practice mistakes and ensure that strategies were put in place to avoid it happening again. The child was informed of their right to raise a complaint about their experiences and helped to understand what had happened. While the manager's review and reflections on the incident are strong and provide clear findings on what could have been done differently, this information has not been consistently translated into the child's records.

One safeguarding issue was responded to promptly and with appropriate rigour to ensure the child's immediate safety. However, the investigation and findings have not been thoroughly captured in the recordings. There are gaps in the information held about children's online presence that would provide further important information about their online friendships, which would strengthen the approach to safeguarding online.

Children are well supported to understand risk, including the risks posed online. Staff continually have conversations with the children to help them understand various issues and talk about the things that are important to them.

Children's records are of varying quality. The manager has created a child-centred template of a child's plan, which is easily accessible for the child and clearly provides all the relevant information. However, in some instances, plans have been written using a first-person narrative without it being clear when they have been shared with the child and if they are the child's words. Other records to identify risk and how to manage these are lengthy and repetitive and do not always contain the personalised detail of how to use the home's chosen approach of the PACE model of care with the child.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The home is run by an extremely committed and passionate manager, who is supported by an equally committed staff team. Her care and diligence towards the children and the home are abundantly clear. The manager leads by example, and the staff team recognises and appreciates this approach. Staff say that they know the manager will never ask them to do anything that she is not prepared to do herself.

There has been a period of instability in the staff team due to unforeseen events that have now concluded. Through this time, staff have worked together to ensure that the children are not affected and have not had to rely on agency or bank staff who the children are not familiar with. The home is in the process of recruiting new team members to ensure future stability, with these team members due to start shortly. Safer recruitment practices are in place.

The manager has strong and effective relationships with the wider professional network. There is strong communication with partners to promote children's interests. The manager is a strong advocate for children and expects this of the staff team also.

The manager strives to improve practice and is a keen learner. She encourages the team to take up learning opportunities to continually improve practice. Staff receive training tailored to the needs of the children in their care. Team meetings regularly include references to learning materials to build staff knowledge.

Supervision is provided regularly for the staff, who all report this to be supportive and meaningful.

The home environment is welcoming, homely and maintained to a high standard. Professionals have repeatedly commented on the caring atmosphere in the home, which contributes to children's feelings of self-worth and importance. However, there is a dedicated office space that detracts from the overall feeling in the home, which the manager already has plans in place to address.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. In particular, children's records must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. For example, all online accounts accessed by the child should be known and recorded, including the online games they are playing, and a list of known online friends the child may regularly speak with as part of their online friendships/gaming activity should be kept. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that children receive care that meets their individual needs and promotes their welfare and a positive sense of self, considering the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs and previous experience. In particular, ensure that all staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support a child's exploration of religion and their cultural identity. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. In particular, carefully consider the appropriateness of recording the child's information, using first-person narrative. Also, ensure that records provide clear and succinct instructions to staff on how to respond to behaviours and potential risks personalised to the child, avoiding repetition and standard responses. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should review the dedicated office space and ensure that a homely environment is maintained. This will provide a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

### **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:** SC407790

**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:**

**Registered manager:** Vanessa Caldicott

## Inspector

Katie Ratcliffe, Social Care Inspector

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