

SC412296

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children. Its statement of purpose states that the home supports children whose behaviour has become a danger to themselves and to others, and who require intensive support from carers.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 20 March 2019.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 25 April 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The children in this home continue to receive care that meets their needs. Strong relationships with partner agencies and regular face-to-face discussions provide opportunities for the staff and professionals to work together to the benefit of the children.

The staff and the children enjoy meaningful and trusting relationships. The children benefit from consistent boundaries and staff who clearly understand their needs.

The staff and education providers work extremely well together. They ensure that all children have good attendance levels, continue to learn and make progress in their education. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, some children have made good progress using online education resources and their confidence in learning has improved. Other children, who were previously non-school attendees, are now maintaining educational placements, and for one child, attendance at an alternative education establishment is proving to be successful.

The children say they can talk freely and openly with staff about any concerns or issues. The children can share their views about their care, the staff and the home. These conversations often happen around the dinner table, in a relaxed and informal way. The staff advocate on behalf of the children, where necessary, and are not afraid to challenge other professionals. The children say staff have helped them to understand the COVID-19 pandemic and how to keep safe and healthy.

There is an ongoing programme of decoration and repair to some areas of the home. The children can personalise their bedrooms if they wish. The children say that they receive suitable pocket money and allowances. Staff assist the children to buy clothes where necessary.

The safety of children

The staff understand how to manage risk and keep children safe. They have developed good relationships with external safeguarding agencies to ensure that all concerns and allegations are reported and managed in accordance with local safeguarding guidance. In addition, the staff have formed good working relationships with a range of external professionals, including the police, drug and alcohol misuse services, youth offending service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The staff understand the complex needs of the children. They have monitored effectively the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the children's emotional and

physical health and sought professional advice when necessary. Access to the advice and support of external agencies has been good, taking the challenges of COVID-19 into account. The staff discuss behaviour at individual key-work sessions, to improve the children's understanding of risk taking on their health, safety and well-being. The staff support the children to make positive changes to reduce risky behaviours and work closely with their social workers in developing strategies to respond to the children's behaviours. This has recently resulted in a significant reduction in the number of missing-from-care incidents for two of the children and the aggressive behaviour of another child.

The staff understand the effect on children's behaviour of being confined indoors during the lockdown period. The staff have responded effectively to incidents of challenging behaviour that have occurred. In particular, and as stated by one professional, they have gone the 'extra mile' to locate children when they have been missing from care. They have provided a range of activities to keep the children engaged and occupied. One child said he really enjoyed a camping trip when COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed.

The staff continue to access training in a variety of formats, including training on safeguarding children. This enables staff to understand the potential impact of abuse and neglect and respond to keep children safe and protected.

Leaders and managers

The responsible individual and registered manager have a wealth of experience and are visible in the home; this enables the staff to easily access advice, support and direction. The registered manager is ably supported by a team of senior staff. There has been minimal movement of staff since the last inspection.

The manager and senior staff ensure that all children's plans are regularly reviewed and consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the easing of restrictions. They are updated following significant events. Staff understand these plans and implement them appropriately.

The independent visitor continues to monitor the progress and well-being of the children. The children can always share their views with the visitor. Any concerns raised by the children have been swiftly responded to.

The registered manager regularly consults with the children and stakeholders and uses the information gathered to improve the children's care and experiences. However, the children's views and wishes are not recorded or reflected on in depth in the six-monthly service review report that is completed by the registered manager. The review report does not provide sufficient detail regarding the areas of the service the registered manager plans to develop.

Good relationships with partner agencies are a strength, which promotes consistency in the messages and practice being delivered to the children.

The home's statement of purpose does not provide detailed, current and correct details of the management and staffing arrangements. Information provided to commissioning authorities is therefore not up to date. The statement about the ethos of the home needs reviewing and updating on how the manager and the staff create an inclusive and family home.

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 must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1)) This particularly relates to current staffing and management arrangements, and the current ethos of the home.	29 January 2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(b)(c)) This particularly relates to gaining more detailed feedback from the children and being more aspirational and developmental in their evaluation of what the leaders wish to focus on looking forward.	30 March 2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC412296

Registered provider: Springfield Road Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 5 Cornfield Terrace, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4NN

Responsible individual: Paula Jarrett

Registered manager: Emma Martin

Inspector

Liz Driver, Social Care Inspector

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