

SC482872

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private organisation. It provides care for up to three children who have had adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The manager was in the process of being registered with Ofsted at the time of this inspection. The manager has the relevant level 5 qualification.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 September 2021

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: 20 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/12/2019	Full	Good
19/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A group of five children lived in this home until the end of March 2021, when they moved to a new home with the manager and the staff team. This original home was then decorated and refreshed for a new manager and staff team to arrive and be ready to welcome up to three children from April 2021. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at this home.

Children experience positive relationships with staff and enjoy spending time with them. These relationships contribute to children feeling safe and making progress. The manager encourages all staff to be child-focused and to put the safety and well-being of children at the centre of their practice. Children enjoy many activities and follow their interests, such as horse riding and a passion for being outdoors and exploring nature.

Children maintain connections with their families. Staff and managers recognise the importance of this and support visits and phone calls with family members who are important to the children. Relatives speak very highly of the care provided for their child. They feel consulted and are working well in partnership with the manager and the team. Friendships are promoted and one friend stayed for a sleepover as part of birthday celebrations.

Children are supported to engage in education. A child who had previously not attended education regularly now goes to school every day. Not only are they attending, they are also achieving success and forming friendships. The manager proudly reports how this child comes home from school having been awarded merits. For children without a school place, the manager is persistent in his communication with other professionals to secure a new school as soon as possible.

Children express their views, wishes and feelings in several ways. Children were observed doing this and records held clearly capture their voices. Daily journals are maintained and capture important moments and progress. However, the journals also record mundane daily routines. Such information is not of any value in helping children to understand their life now or in the future. The quality and content of the journals require a review.

Children enjoy the garden and grounds, where they can play and visit the resident pony and donkeys. In general, the home environment is of a good standard. A few areas require a clean, a tidy and some repairs to damage. There are some mirrors in the home but not in the bathroom. A bathroom mirror is required to support children with their personal hygiene and self-esteem.

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

Children say that they feel safe in this home and their current behaviour reflects this sense of security. Social workers and family members report that this home does a

fantastic job to safely meet the needs of the children. Concerns about the misuse of a mobile phone were managed quickly and effectively by introducing some parental controls through a SIM card. Children are supported and educated in how to protect themselves with the safe use of technology.

Prior to May 2021, there were no incidents of children going missing from the home. During a five-week period, one child was reported missing seven times as she did not return to the home after being out with friends. Staff follow a clear protocol if children do go missing, trying to find them and establish telephone contact. The child's lack of engagement at the home and the pull factor of friends in the community led to a decision for this child to move to another place to live.

Staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to respond to any concerns. Prior to April 2021, the manager appropriately made seven referrals to the designated officer for allegations regarding concerns, or alleged concerns, about staff members' practice. Leaders and managers took swift action to ensure the safety and protection of children. The manager and staff team know the current children well. Risks are identified and understood by the staff team. However, the inspectors noted one omission in a written risk-management document. This is in relation to the fact that, although staff are alert to the risk from the local authority, the document does not fully reflect this.

Restraint of children occurred prior to April 2021, when staff intervened to prevent children harming themselves or others. Records are detailed and confirm interventions were appropriate. Since April 2021, there has been no cause to use restraint.

When children are unsettled in their behaviour, staff respond with a supportive and gentle approach, encouraging children to make the right choices and negotiate. One family member said, 'They go with [Name of child]'s wishes, within the rules.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been at this home since April 2021 and was registered with Ofsted on completion of this inspection. Despite being new to the role, staff, social workers and family members report very positively on his management and leadership of this home. The manager has appropriately responded to one complaint and ensured a satisfactory outcome.

One requirement from the last inspection has been completed. Senior leaders changed the arrangements for an independent person to visit the home each month, and the quality of this reporting has improved.

There is a small staff team in place, with further recruitment underway. Staff shortages do not impact on the quality of care for children as familiar adults are always available to them. Additional staff support is provided by staff from other homes managed by this organisation and regular agency staff. Recruitment checks are very thorough to ensure that staff are suitable to care for children.

Supervision occurs regularly for team members and agency staff. Records of supervision show appropriate reflection on the children's needs, staff practice and professional development. Staff report that they are supported well through training and supervision by the management team.

In general, the quality of records is good, with regular evaluation and analysis to identify any patterns or trends. The manager reviewed why one child was not suitable to remain living here and needed to move on. This led to some learning about the referral and matching process. As a result, the next child was able to have visits and an overnight stay before the decision was made that they could live at this home and their needs could be met. The recording systems are onerous at times and would benefit from a streamlined approach.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of its children as a homely and domestic environment. In particular, provide a mirror for the bathroom, ensure that the settee covers are cleaned and arrange for any damage to be repaired promptly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- 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, ensure that all known safeguarding risks are included in risk-management assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. In particular, consider streamlining some documents to enhance internal monitoring and provide greater clarity on the purpose of each record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. In particular, review the daily journals to ensure that the information recorded is useful to the children now and when they access these records in the future. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: SC482872

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Park Blue Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Fairfield Lodge, Evenwood Gate, Bishop Auckland
DL14 9NH

Responsible individual: Richard Parker

Registered manager: Richard Humphreys

Inspectors

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector
Kendra Bell, Her Majesty's Inspector

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