

1228091

Registered provider: Phoenix Care And Education Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children home is owned by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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 is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 19 April 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection

Three compliance notices were issued on 2 May 2017 in relation to regulations 12, 13 and 32. A monitoring visit took place on 6 June 2017 and all of the compliance notices have been met.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The organisation and the manager have not fully embedded effective management systems for monitoring the quality of care provided. This is limiting their ability to fully understand the home's strengths and weaknesses and take suitable action to prevent and deal with any shortfalls to improve children's experiences.
- The organisation and the manager have not completed an up-to-date and comprehensive statement of purpose and function that provides accurate information about the home and the services it provides.
- All the necessary checks and information are not in place before people start working with children to minimise any potential risks to them from unsuitable people. This important information is not collated and available on each member of staff's file.
- The manager does not have the opportunity for practice-related supervision with a person with appropriate experience and professional qualifications. This is limiting her abilities to reflect critically on her performance and the emotional impact of the work, and discuss her professional development.
- The staff have not had training opportunities so far to develop their understanding of the risks of child sexual exploitation and technology and social media, and develop their skills in helping children manage their feelings and control their behaviour.
- Children's case records do not include up-to-date information about each child's assessed needs and plans for the arrangements for their care. Important information about some children's education and health needs is not available to help staff understand how each child should be supported to best meet their needs.

The children's home's strengths:

- A permanent experienced and qualified manager has brought structure and effective leadership to the management of the home. She is developing a staff team that is helping children to reach their education potential, enjoy better health and emotional well-being and be protected from the risk of harm.
- Children are protected from the risk of harm. Children receive a good standard of care that is keeping them safe. They are increasingly safer from the risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation, bullying, going missing and self-harm. Children feel safe and able to talk to staff about their worries. They know that staff will listen to what they have to say, take their concerns seriously and take action to keep them safe. The manager has identified and taken effective action when there has been a serious concern about a child's welfare. The manager provides staff with clear guidance and support that has built their understanding of safeguarding procedures, identifying and managing risk, and their

responsibilities for protecting children.

- The manager and staff are creating a nurturing and reliable environment where children are developing a strong sense of emotional security. Children have clear and unambiguous routines and boundaries. They know what is happening each day, understand the expected standard of behaviour, and how they will be treated. They are less anxious and more able to manage their feelings safely.
- Staff actively support children to spend time with their family members and friends and maintain significant relationships. They always ensure that seeing these important people is a safe and enjoyable experience.
- Significant progress has been made in encouraging and supporting children to return to full-time education. Children are enjoying school and making excellent progress. Structured education plans are in place to prepare another child for returning to school.
- Careful care planning and good decision-making have resulted in children coming to live at the home only after full consideration being given to staff's ability to meet their assessed needs or their compatibility with other children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/04/2017	Full	Inadequate
09/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph 8(1) requires the registered person to ensure —</p> <p>(8)(2)(a) that staff</p> <p>(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>(Regulation 8)</p>	30/09/2017
<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>(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>(b) promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to —</p> <p>2(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>(f) 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>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13)</p>	31/08/2017
<p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>(Regulation 23(1))</p>	28/08/2017
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The</p>	31/08/2017

<p>registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home when full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>The registered person may permit an individual to work at the home only if the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2, but enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete; full and satisfactory information has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2; the registered person considers the circumstances are exceptional; and the registered person ensures that the individual is appropriately supervised carrying out their duties, pending receipt of the outstanding information. (Regulation 32(1) (3)(d)) & 7(a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(a) & (b))</p>	30/09/2017
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child and ensure these are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))</p>	31/08/2017
<p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))</p>	31/08/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are benefiting from living in a friendly and stable home environment. They receive individualised care that consistently meets their needs and is helping them to making pleasing progress in all areas of their lives. A child said that the staff have 'helped me a lot and understand my feelings. I love it here, it helps me a lot.' Children are increasingly happier, safer, more involved in education, healthier, able to build positive relationships, and manage their feelings and control their behaviour.

The manager and staff have a clearer understanding of children's needs, interests and family circumstances, and find out what works for individual young people. They are building trusting relationships with children, regardless of the complexity of children's needs. An independent reviewing officer said that their placed child 'has a good relationship with the staff and she trusts them'. Children feel valued because they know that staff care about them, enjoy spending time with them, are interested in their welfare, want what is best for them, and always take their wishes and feelings seriously.

The children said that 'they listen to me when I tell them things' and 'I get listened to and I have settled down now.' The manager and staff make every effort to make sure that children are involved in the day-to-day decisions about their clothes, the food they eat and how they spend their spare time. They are also involved in the decoration of the home, and the design and content of the children's guide. The manager and staff balance young people's views against what they judge to be in the children's best interests and work out the best way forward. For example, they are helping children not to take on adult responsibilities in their families. They help children to express their views about the arrangements for their care and support them to make complaints when they are unhappy. They ensure that children have access to suitable legal advice to help them challenge the placing authority's decisions about their lives.

The manager and staff are helping children to rebuild important relationships and feel part of their family again. The children regularly see the important people in their family, for example staying regularly overnight with a grandmother. A child said that staff 'sorted things out quickly so I could see my friends and Nan. I am starting to see more of my family.' Staff recognise how important this is for children, but also that it can be a stressful time. They make every effort to ensure that seeing their families is a safe and positive experience for everyone involved.

The manager is building positive working relationships with social workers, teachers and health workers. They are actively working together to improve the quality of care planning to ensure that the people and services supporting children are working to a coordinated plan that meets all of the assessed needs. However, the home is still waiting to receive all the up-to-date and relevant information from placing authorities that is needed to make sure that children are getting the right personalised support.

The manager has improved the quality of decision-making about which children should come to live at the home. She gathers the necessary information about the child and gives thorough consideration about the staff's ability to respond effectively to the child's needs. She also considers the level of risk, the compatibility of the children to live together, and the impact on the children already living in the home. A new child has been admitted and moved in quickly, but in a planned way, which did not disrupt the care arrangements for the child already living in the home. Both children's needs have been carefully matched and they get on really well. The child who moved in said that 'Everything is really good. I feel at home and was made to feel welcome.' Her independent reviewing officer confirmed that the move has been extremely positive. She said that 'she has settled in really well; she is smiling, looking well and happy. She is sleeping much better and has personalised her room. The staff have a good handle on her needs and she has good relationships with the staff and the other child.'

Children's participation in education has significantly improved. The manager and staff work effectively with children, schools, and the placing authority's virtual school to ensure that children's educational needs are met. They have created an environment and daily routine that encourage and support children's education. Since May 2017, the manager and staff have helped one of the children to return to school. This is a remarkable achievement. She is now going every day, doing well and playing an active

part in the life of the school. She is showing her academic abilities and is on track to gain good GCSEs. She has gained awards for mathematics, the Star of the Year, and best trainee teaching assistant for mentoring younger children. However, the staff do not have up-to-date copies of her personal education plan, any statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. This does not help staff to understand fully her education needs and know how best to support the child's learning.

The manager and staff are working hard to help the other child to return to a school that meets her needs as soon as possible. She is motivated to learn and has been routinely doing work with staff to prepare her for school. Staff have taken her to see local schools and colleges, and are actively seeking a place for her at the school she likes the best. Both children have lots of opportunities in the home to develop their skills and interests through informal learning. They are routinely involved in planning meals, shopping and cooking. They are both very good cooks and make a range of meals and cakes. They also enjoy a variety of interesting activities, which often include their friends. They like going to the cinema, trips to the local beach and forest, Blackpool, and pamper and games nights at home.

The manager and staff have a clear understanding of children's individual health needs, including emotional and psychological needs. Children's outstanding dental treatment and meetings with psychology services have been arranged. Staff ensure that children have access to community health services and get appropriate medical attention when they are unwell. They support and encourage children to take responsibility for their own health by developing a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, and the importance of a healthy diet and physical exercise. Children's medication is stored securely and staff have received training in handling medication and emergency first aid. However, the internal monitoring of the medication arrangements is not effective and has failed to identify when the administration of controlled drugs is not witnessed by a second member of staff and when the medication records are incomplete.

The manager and staff have worked hard to improve the quality of the house to make sure that children are living in a pleasant and comfortable place, which is furnished and decorated to a good standard. Children have plenty of personal space. Their bedrooms are tidy and well decorated to reflect their characters and interests. Both children have recently decorated their bedrooms and proudly showed off the results.

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

Children receive a good standard of care that is keeping them safe. They are increasingly safer from the risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation, bullying, going missing and self-harm. Children feel safe and able to talk to staff about their worries. They know that staff will listen to what they have to say, take their concerns seriously, give them reassurance and help to sort out their problem. Significantly, a child contacted staff immediately for help when she was worried about her safety. This showed that she trusted them and knew that they would keep her safe.

The manager has identified and taken effective action when there has been a serious

concern about a child's welfare. She followed the safeguarding procedures and regulations by contacting the child's placing authority, the local designated officer and Ofsted with her concerns. The local designated officer reported that the manager showed a good understanding of safeguarding issues and shared information openly in a timely way. The manager also contacts the local designated officer for advice and guidance in working out the most appropriate response to potential safeguarding concerns. The manager shows the ability to work in a coordinated way with statutory safeguarding agencies and takes appropriate action to protect children in line with the legal guidelines. The manager informs Ofsted of serious incidents involving the children. She is able to show that she and staff understand, recognise and deal with concerns about children's safety.

The manager is building good, safe care practice. She provides staff with clear guidance and support. Staff have had opportunities individually and as a team to reflect critically on the times when children have been at risk of harm, to challenge poor practice and to develop practice that helps to keep children safe. An appropriate training plan has helped staff to build their understanding of safeguarding procedures, to identify and manage risk, and appreciate when whistle-blowing is necessary. They now have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities for protecting children. They have the skills to identify and understand risk, and use suitable and proportionate protective measures to handle situations safely. The manager has established clear routines and expectations for staff which make sure that children are supervised appropriately at all times. Their decisions are based on a thorough assessment of risk and each child's individual needs. Staff know where children are and when children have left the house feeling upset. For example, on one occasion, staff engaged with a child positively and provided her with the necessary support to ensure that she returned safely and was protected from harm.

Staff carefully balance each child's protection with providing them with an appropriate level of freedom and choice about how they spend their free time. This means that children are enjoying the same experiences as other children of the same age, including spending time with their friends and family, and having friends to stay overnight. This has worked out really well and the children have had a positive time with peers.

Staff also know what they should do if a child goes missing. Positively, children usually do not go missing from this home. A child who used to go missing a lot where she used to live has not been missing at all since she moved in. When children go out, they are very good at keeping in touch with staff and come home on time. Staff also routinely check in with children when they are seeing their friends and families to see how things are going. The manager and staff have not yet started work with the children about the safe use of technology, the internet and social media. They recognised that this work is a priority for each child and have started to gather together suitable resources to share with the children.

The manager and staff have built a nurturing and reliable environment where children are developing a strong sense of emotional security. Children are less anxious and more able to manage their feelings safely. They provide children with clear and unambiguous routines and boundaries, so children know what is happening each day, understand the

expected standard of behaviour, and how they will be treated. A child said that 'they tell me everything that is going on'. Staff encourage and reinforce positive behaviour through lots of praise and rewards. Children are actively involved in agreeing and revising their targets and feel that they are treated fairly. Children's behaviour is usually very good. The group is coping much better with change, including going back to school, the introduction of the new manager, and accepting a new child moving in.

Staff are developing a good understanding of the best ways to help children who may feel upset, worried, frustrated or angry. Their calm approach helps children talk about what is wrong. They show that they are listening, can see why children are upset, validate their feelings, provide reassurance and try to work things out together. Staff are helping children to find their own ways to manage their feelings. For example, one child recognises when she is becoming upset and gives herself time and space to help her feel calmer. Staff encourage her to write down the things she wants to share with her social worker, so she is able to share her views even if she starts to get upset.

The manager and staff work hard to build positive relationships with the children. The way in which staff have adapted their own behaviour and the way that they talk to children have successfully helped them rebuild relationships with children following disagreements. Humour is used appropriately to create a warm and friendly atmosphere where everyone gets along most of the time, just like in families. A child said that she has only fallen out with the other once, and that 'I can't remember what it was about, but we talked and sorted it out ourselves.' Staff are helping children to learn the skills to understand about what makes a healthy and supportive relationship. Children are showing that they are able to work through problems to repair important relationships with friends and members of their families.

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

A new permanent manager with relevant experience and management qualifications started work in May 2017. She has quickly brought structure and effective leadership to the management of the home. The manager has a clear and ambitious vision to help children to reach their education potential, enjoy better health and emotional well-being and be protected from the risk of harm. She is taking the steps needed to make improvements by introducing: clear and unambiguous expectations of standards of behaviour for all staff and children; setting up consistent daily routines for children; systems to improve communication between staff and reflect on their practice; and efficient recording systems that provide an accurate picture of children's experiences and progress. Children are clearly benefiting from living in a better organised home that is helping them be safer, to do well at school, enjoy positive relationships with other children and adults, and better manage their feelings.

The manager has created the right environment for staff to provide young people with a better standard of care and consistency. Only experienced and suitably qualified staff are in senior positions and have the competence to take on the extra responsibilities. The appointment of an experienced deputy manager means that staff are getting additional support and guidance. Staff are well motivated and work together cohesively. Sufficient

suitable staff are available to meet all the children's assessed needs. The staffing arrangements provide children with a continuity of care and opportunities to form relationships with the people caring for them each day.

The manager provides each member of staff with support, guidance and encouragement. Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on young people's progress, their own and team performance, to share skills, and develop their skills and knowledge. Staff are supported to achieve the relevant childcare level 3 diploma. The manager has provided staff with suitable relevant training. So far, this training has focused appropriately on building staff's skills in primary care, including understanding their roles and responsibilities, safeguarding procedures, attachment theory and recovery from trauma, first aid, and managing medication. Staff have not yet had training opportunities to understand the risks of child sexual exploitation, the risks and safe use of technology and social media, and supporting children to manage their behaviour safely.

The organisation and manager, however, still need to make improvements in relation to: the information available about the function of the service; the scrutiny of the quality of care and the manager's performance; the recruitment of staff; and the quality of some children's case records. The manager has not completed a statement of purpose that sets out the aims and objectives of the home, the services it provides and to reflect the changes in the management of the home. The statement is an important document to assist the organisation, placing authorities and Ofsted to assess the quality of the care and measure the effectiveness of meeting children's needs. The organisation has not arranged for the regular supervision of the manager from a person with appropriate experience and qualifications. The manager would benefit from this support and guidance to reflect on practice-related issues for her own continuous professional development and the development of the home.

The organisation has now appointed a responsible individual to provide oversight and scrutiny of the management of the home. However, systems for monitoring and reviewing the quality of care are not yet effective. The proposed internal monitoring by the responsible individual and the other directors is not being carried out to ensure that the necessary progress is being made. The manager has not completed a review of the quality of care that evaluates its impact on children's experiences and outcomes. This limits the manager and the organisation's understanding about what they do well and areas that need to improve. The lack of thorough monitoring and oversight has failed to identify: errors in the recording of medication; a child's case records were not up to date or organised to the expected standard; and a key worker's report for a child's review meeting had not been completed in plenty of time to share it with the child and independent reviewing officer before the start of the meeting.

Positively, an independent person is providing a detailed and impartial assessment each month of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children living in the home. The independent visitor has not sent copies of his report to Ofsted to demonstrate the quality of care that children are receiving.

The organisation was not able to show that it follows safe recruitment practices that safeguard children and minimise any potential risks to them. All the necessary recruitment information is not collated and available on each member of staff's file, including: a record of telephone conversations to verify written references; a record of the reasons the organisation permitted an individual to start work without obtaining written references; and the arrangements for supervising the duties of that individual until the outstanding information is received and checked.

The manager assertively and appropriately challenges social workers when she is concerned that children are not getting a good service and to provide her with all the relevant information and plans she needs to look after each child properly. A social worker said that 'the manager proactively chases things up' to make sure that children's needs are met. Unfortunately, the manager is still struggling to get up-to-date information from a child's social worker. Not every child's case records are well organised and have all the relevant information easily available. This makes it difficult to understand fully the child's needs and journey and to measure her progress. This child did not have up-to-date information about her assessed needs and plans showing how she should be supported on a daily basis. In particular, the case records did not include: up-to-date copies of the child's risk assessment; behaviour management plan, health assessments and consent for medical treatment and the placing authority's care plan.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1228091

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Phoenix Care And Education Ltd

Responsible individual: Gregory Tyson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Nick Veysey, social care regulatory inspector
Karen Willson, social care regulatory inspector

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