

1256404

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 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

requires improvement to be 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: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

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

- Managers should give careful consideration to the needs of children already living in the home when making decisions about children moving in to the home.
- Managers should evaluate the experiences of children when decisions are made for them to move on and evaluate the impact on the children living in the home.
- Staff and managers should support children to manage peer relationships positively.
- Staff should consistently maintain good quality, careful, clear records for children that also capture children's views.
- The manager should consider how to prioritise securing education placements as part of the pre-admission process.

The children's home's strengths:

- Children are building positive, nurturing relationships with staff.
- Children are making progress in education and developing independence skills.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard requires the registered manager to—</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of quality of care within the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(f))</p> <p>This is in relation to improving the evaluation of planned and unplanned endings to children's placements, to inform decisions regarding placements and develop practice within the home. The evaluation should also review the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies and interventions.</p>	06/10/2017
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child,</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe,</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))</p>	06/10/2017

Recommendation

Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording... Information about the child must always be recorded in such a way that will be helpful to the child.

('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

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

Children in this home are not yet receiving consistently good care and, as a result of changes in the home, they have struggled to build and sustain positive relationships with peers. Children report that they have experienced disruption due to other children's behaviours and there have been a number of reports of bullying. The manager and staff believe that a number of short-term placements have had an impact upon children's experiences. Some placements have ended in an unplanned way, as a result of children's behaviour and needs.

Children are building nurturing, trusting relationships with stable, committed staff. Currently, there are some signs that children are beginning to settle and enjoy positive group experiences. One child reported: 'Staff are respectful and listen.'

There is an education co-ordinator for the provider, who supports staff in the home to ensure that there are appropriate education placements for all of the children. He has an overview of children's attendance and progress. All children have education placements, and most children have an appropriate education plan in place. However, one child does not have an education plan in place and is not yet receiving 25 hours of education per week. This is due to the timing of their placement and some delay by the placing authority in securing education provision. The manager has been tenacious in addressing this, and education provision is now in place. For some children, engaging in education represents very good progress from their starting points. Staff encourage and promote attendance and participation. Achievements are celebrated, and staff are aspirational for the children.

The manager should consider how education placements can be prioritised as part of the pre-admission assessment and information-gathering processes.

This home is in the process of introducing a child-friendly care planning tool. This new care-planning process has been reviewed and it firmly incorporates the views of children and other agencies about progress made in a number of areas. The care planning tool measures progress and identifies any blocks to progress, so that action can be taken.

However, children's records generally require improvement to be good.

Key-work records do not always evidence children's views. In addition, two records viewed included significant information that had been shared by children, but did not evidence what action the key worker had taken in response to the information.

There are health plans that include helpful information about a child's history. Daily records demonstrate that children's health needs are responded to promptly. For example, following minor accidents or illnesses, advice is sought and appointments are made. Staff are proactive in seeking advice and making appointments with specialist services when children require assessment or treatment. In the case of one child, there has been progress in arranging an assessment by a community paediatrician as a result of staff perseverance. Unfortunately, the health plans are not consistently updated by staff or clear about the outcomes of health appointments. Therefore staff and managers

cannot plan for children's subsequent appointments.

Children are learning independence skills and life skills. One child has made significant progress in their social skills. There are clear routines and expectations in place from the start. Children receive incentives for establishing good routines. Children are learning to cook and take responsibility for their rooms and their own laundry. There is an accredited independence skills programme for children aged 15 years plus. Children report that they find this helpful and are more confident about living independently in the future.

There are a range of opportunities in place for children to contribute to their care planning and their care arrangements. Children contribute to weekly residents' meetings. The manager responds to any requests or concerns in a timely way.

One child said: 'Staff here always come into work with a smile on their face. Staff can tell if I am in a bad mood or feeling sad, and they ask me if I am ok and will give me space if I need it.'

Children know how to make complaints. The deputy manager was looking into two complaints at the time of the inspection.

Children, and partner agencies, report that staff promote and facilitate contact arrangements. Contact arrangements are agreed with social workers as part of the care plan. Staff also encourage children to arrange contact with friends. In this way children maintain important relationships.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children in this home have a range of complex needs and behaviours. Partner agencies report that staff assess children's needs, share information with social workers and professionals, and contribute to planning meetings.

There are risk assessments and behaviour management plans for each child. However, one child's risk assessment had a number of deficits. There was no reference to the risks associated with the use of digital technology. This child's history prior to admission included concerns about use of social media. There was no reference to this child's vulnerability to risk due to their additional needs. Resources to work with this child were not tailored to their additional needs. This means there was not an accurate assessment of risk to inform safe care planning and individual work with the child.

It is positive that there are 'home' pets and children are encouraged to take responsibility for caring for them and nurturing them. Unfortunately, risks to pets as a result of children's behaviours was not evident in children's risk assessments. A requirement is made to enhance practice and understanding of risks to children and ensure that risk assessments capture all concerns.

Staff have followed anti-bullying procedures and have undertaken key-work with children. Staff have directly intervened to prevent bullying. However, there have been a number of incidents involving one child targeting another child. This culminated in a more serious incident involving other children in the home.

A decision was made to move the child temporarily, for their own safety. This is not providing stable, safe care. The manager should review this incident and the circumstances leading to it, and view this as an exercise in lessons learned. A requirement is made for the manager to evaluate placements, to inform practice and pre-admission assessment processes in the home.

Behaviour management strategies have not been effective in preventing the targeting of one child by another child, and the unplanned ending of a child's placement as result of their behaviour. A review of these incidents should include the effectiveness of behaviour management plans and strategies used by staff.

Staff receive training in diverting children's challenging behaviour. In response to a small number of incidents, staff have used low-level physical intervention to prevent children harming themselves or others.

Children report that they generally feel safe in this home. However, one child has complained that she has been subject to some bullying behaviour by peers. Other children have complained about disruption in the home as a result of children's behaviour, for example disturbed nights and an impact on their sleep. One child has chosen to stay with a family member, following conflict with another child in the home. Staff are closely monitoring this child's welfare and liaising with the placing authority. This is indicative of the child feeling unsettled.

There are a low number of missing incidents. One child, who is vulnerable to exploitation, has had a number of unauthorised absences and missing episodes. However, there is a marked reduction in this behaviour since the child moved into this home.

One local authority has not been completing independent return interviews. The registered manager has challenged this, and escalated their concerns to senior managers.

Staff are not consistently recording good quality, internal return home interviews. These are essential to understanding and preventing risks to children. A recommendation is made about improving children's records.

A police missing co-ordinator has reported that staff are proactive and timely in reporting concerns and in searching for children.

The registered manager has referred an allegation made by a child to the local authority designated officer. The recommendation was for an investigation by the provider. This has been promptly undertaken and the outcome is being considered. There is no risk to children's welfare as a result of this concern. This demonstrates that managers understand and follow procedures in response to allegations against staff. It also demonstrates that children have confidence in raising concerns.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. An experienced deputy manager supports him. Managers and staff are aspirational for the children.

A feature of this inspection is the impact on children where there are a number of short-term placements being made. Some admissions and discharges are planned; however, some children have moved on as a result of their behaviour and needs. The manager has reflected on this and is reviewing the admission processes, and lessons learned from a particular incident.

Staff attribute some of the challenges to the number of changes of placements over a relatively short period of time, which has meant that children have struggled to settle and to build relationships with peers.

Managers report that staff have been resilient and reliable during this time. Staffing has remained stable. Some staff are experienced and qualified. Other staff are less experienced and are currently undertaking the required qualification. Managers ensure that there are sufficient staff on duty and plan for a balance of staff experience and gender.

Staff report that they receive regular supervision and support and that there is good morale. Records demonstrate that supervision takes place regularly, and covers safeguarding and reflective practice. Managers provide enhanced supervision for less experienced staff. Managers are reviewing the quality of supervision.

Staff receive training, including a protected induction period, and development opportunities. The manager will include a review of staff skills and training needs as part of the quality of care review following this inspection.

The manager is aware of the strengths and areas needing development for staff and the service. He is motivated to improve outcomes for children. He responds promptly to any recommendations arising from the independent visitor's reports. The manager is growing in confidence in challenging partners if there is delay in information sharing or progressing care plans for children.

One parent has made a complaint about her child's care. The manager has arranged for the complaint to be investigated by another manager who is independent of the home.

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. Whenever 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 and 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: 1256404

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Registered provider address: Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley BR1 1LT

Responsible individual: Joanne Collins

Registered manager: Matthew Earnshaw

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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