

1240936

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is one of four that are owned and operated by a private company under a contract with a local authority.

Inspection date: 2 November 2017

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 13 June 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

This interim inspection was brought forward. Ofsted received concerns from several sources about the quality of care, safeguarding and the quality of management. Ofsted asked the responsible individual to investigate these matters. He made a full response which identified some shortfalls. The inspector considered these issues at this inspection and found that the area manager and new home manager had made progress in addressing all the issues identified by the responsible individual.

The progress and experiences of children since the last inspection are variable. Staff have struggled to engage children, manage their challenges and improve their outcomes since the home opened. Children have not always had school or alternative education provision. They have gone missing, been bullied and have offended. Staff have made

great efforts to change children's entrenched behaviour. Despite careful matching of new admissions, the varied needs of children have proved difficult to manage. Bullying reached a peak in September, resulting in one child being seriously assaulted by another child. The placements of three children have broken down after linked incidents.

One child continues to experience stability. His family and friends are welcomed, and this has helped him to develop a positive identity. Two new children have recently moved in at short notice after placement breakdowns elsewhere. The placing social worker of one was realistic that staff at this home could make a difference despite all their efforts.

The arrangements for child protection and the staff's response to children are better. Staff action has now reduced bullying and made sure that children are safer online and when they go missing from care. Staff now understand and implement safeguarding policies. Staff have worked to protect and minimise the impact of bullying, and training is planned.

Staff input is still not always clear in the records that staff produce about incidents or the work that they do to improve children's well-being after bullying and when children go missing from care. The new manager has delayed her evaluation of 'missing' incidents because of having to wait for the local authority to conduct return home interviews. Her monitoring does not yet show that she has escalated her concerns when these important information-gathering interviews are delayed or are not undertaken.

The registered manager now works in another of the provider's children's homes, and not in a managerial capacity. The registered person appointed a new manager in July 2017. She has applied to register with Ofsted. Staff turnover and shortages have put strain on the remaining members of the staff team. The responsible individual is still supporting the home with agency staff until staffing sufficiency, experience and skill on each shift can be guaranteed, including at shift leader and management level.

Recent internal and external monitoring has identified and improved the quality of care and professional practice. Staff say that the quality of their line management and supervision has improved under the new manager. Managerial tracking of educational attendance and outcomes has recently begun, and managers now meet with local authority education officers every three months to discuss children's progress. The new manager has successfully challenged the placing authority when it has not supported children by regular visits. However, learning after placement breakdown is not yet evident in her managerial reports.

The new manager has taken action in conjunction with the area manager in relation to six of the seven previous requirements. Further work is essential to provide a sufficient, skilled staff team that delivers continuity of care to children.

The staff now protect children effectively. They assess risks carefully and take action to reduce unnecessary risk. Children now receive effectively planned care. Children's needs, including their anxiety and mental health, are now met. Better daily routines are now helping children to have sufficient sleep. All children are now up and ready for their day.

All staff now have regular recorded supervision with their manager and meet together for regular team meetings, which are attended by the organisation's psychologist. Staff now have up-to-date statutory information about children's placement plans, health, and educational needs and goals. The registered person now makes sure that all significant incidents are notified to Ofsted. There has now been consultation with children, parents, placing authorities and staff about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care. This tells the registered person that the service is moving in the right direction.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1), (2)(c)(d)(e))</p>	31/01/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure the children's home works with the local authority to make sure the young people they are responsible for are getting the support they need to participate. For further information see 'Participation of young people: education, employment and training', www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.17)
- Ensure managers anticipate difficulties and review incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

In particular, demonstrate managerial review of the quality of response when children go missing from care and the delivery of placement aims against the local authority plan when evaluating placement success, once children move on.

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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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: 1240936

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Meadows Care Limited, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Niel Shelmerdine

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

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