

1255407

Registered provider: Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a new children's home that is operated by a regional provider. It is registered for four children.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **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 provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

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 is good because:

- This is the first inspection of this children's home. Since the home opened, careful and considered decision-making has taken place in respect of the admission of children to the home. The home is registered for four children. Currently two children live at the home and have done so for approximately four months. The registered manager is determined to put the needs of these children first and has told the inspector that he will not admit another child until both children are very settled.
- Both children are settling well and making good progress in a range of areas in their lives. There is a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the placement and where further progress is needed, including in helping children to become increasingly safe and in achieving their educational potential. Relationships between children and the adults who care for them are excellent. Children are benefiting from having unlimited opportunities to talk to the manager and staff. They are building trusting relationships, and value being at the centre of decision-making. They are beginning to understand why certain decisions are made, even if they don't always agree with them. The manager and staff are working well with the children's social workers.
- The physical environment of the home is spacious and welcoming. There is a games/art room which is well used. Both children are creative and enjoy activities such as making mosaics. There is a lovely atmosphere in the home. The kitchen-diner is the hub of the home and staff and children congregate in this area, cooking and chatting.

The children's home's areas for development:

- During this inspection there were no serious shortfalls identified. Some areas do need improving, including: the consistency of children receiving independent return home interviews; the provision of specialist training to meet children's needs and keep them safe; and the monitoring of practices to identify if further improvements can be made to benefit children.
- Two members of staff who have worked for the company for nearly two years have not yet completed their level 3 diploma in residential childcare, and are going to exceed the expected time frame. This was discussed during the inspection and an agreement was reached about completion dates.
- Some management tasks require improvement to be good. Staff supervisions need to be completed regularly.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

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>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person ensures that staff have experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>In particular, this refers to staff having training in self-harm, including ligatures and access to appropriate equipment.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(2)(c))</p>	30/04/2018
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person uses monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>In particular, this refers to the importance of providing thorough oversight of sanctions, whether they are fair and if staff can improve their practices to help children.</p> <p>(Regulation 13(2)(h))</p>	14/04/2018
<p>32: Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all individuals who work in the home in a care role have the appropriate qualification, a level 3 diploma for residential childcare, within 2 years of working in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 32(4))</p>	31/07/2018
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.</p> <p>(Regulation 33(4)(b))</p>	30/04/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that the local authority provides the opportunity for children and young people to have independent return home interviews when they have been missing. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. Children missing from home agreed protocols with local authorities should be reviewed regularly and be scrutinised by the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB) when the above is not happening. ('Guide to the children's homes

regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraphs 9.23–9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Both children living in this home have done so for approximately four months, and are starting to settle. The manager and the staff are establishing really positive relationships with both of the children. There is constant, open communication between them and in this way both children are learning to start to trust the adults who care for them. The manager has made the decision not to admit any further children to the home until both children feel really secure and settled in their home.

Children have a strong voice and staff are good at listening to them. Their differences are understood and embraced and staff are providing each child with personalised care which is sensitive and responsive to their identity and family history. Staff are also mindful of the children's vulnerabilities, and are working effectively with other professionals such as social workers. Placement plans are thorough and up to date and the aims and objectives of each child living in this home are clear. The inspector highlighted how the home's records could more effectively evidence the progress that children are making.

Children are supported to develop their independence and their understanding of how to protect themselves. If children are away from the home and are in distress they telephone the manager or staff and know they will help them. Good support is given to help children to regularly see their friends and families.

Staff are helping children to lead healthier lifestyles by encouraging exercise and healthy diets. During the inspection, one child expressed that she would like to have a smoothie-maker to help her to eat more fruit and this was readily agreed to. Specialist help is made available, including assessments and therapeutic support. If a child refuses help, staff will quietly work towards helping the child to understand how it may be beneficial to them. The home has a designated games and art room, which is used for creative projects such as mosaicking.

Both children attend a mainstream school and one child in particular is doing well. The other child is struggling through a difficult period, but a range of professionals are in regular contact to support her to do well in her examinations and make an informed choice about her next step.

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

When a child goes missing from the home, every effort is made to keep in touch with the child and return them home safely, including actively searching for them. Since the

home opened, there have been seven incidents of missing. Correct reporting procedures were followed each time, but on three recent occasions the child did not have an independent return home interview within the expected timescale of 72 hours. In part this was due to extreme weather conditions, but it was also because a decision was made to complete one visit to cover three incidents that occurred close together. This approach requires improvement to ensure that children are given timely opportunities to talk to someone independent of the home and hopefully identify ways to reduce incidents of a child going missing again.

Most staff have not had training in self-harm. Recently the company has incorporated coverage of this area in its induction, but current staff at this home have not yet benefited from it. The staff do not have access to appropriate equipment that might be needed in the event of an emergency. This matter needs to be addressed promptly to ensure that staff have the skills they may need to keep the children in their care safe.

Risks are well identified and safeguarding procedures are followed. Staff understand the risks that the use of the internet may pose to children. They help children to understand why certain procedures are in place and why it is imperative that adults who care for them act to protect them from the risk of harm. Individual risk assessments are thorough. The inspector advised that there should be an amendment to the format of the document to ensure that the most serious risks are clearly identifiable. Behaviour is positively managed and there have been no physical restraints carried out since the home opened.

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

The manager has appropriate qualifications and experience. Two more staff, including the senior, also hold an appropriate qualification. The remaining five members of staff are either part way through their courses or will shortly be starting them, once they have successfully completed their probation. Two staff are likely to fall outside of the two-year timescale requirement. This shortfall was discussed during the inspection, including the mitigating circumstances of one member of staff, and revised timescales were agreed.

Some management tasks require improvement to be good. Staff supervisions need to be completed regularly. This is especially important for a new team and for inexperienced members of staff who are still in probation. Also, while sanctions are not extensively used, the onus being more on incentives and rewards, which is positive, sanctions that have been used have not had thorough management oversight. This means that an opportunity has been lost by the manager to reflect on practices and to identify where there is an opportunity to improve practices to benefit children.

Children and staff speak well of the manager. They feel he is available to them and very supportive. The home is suitably staffed and resourced. The manager and the staff team work effectively together to provide good levels of stability and consistency, which children are benefiting from.

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 differences 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: 1255407

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd

Registered provider address: Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd, Rolle Quay, Barnstaple
EX31 1JE

Responsible individual: Stephen Nicholson

Registered manager: Matthew Bleeks

Inspector

Norma Welsby: social care inspector

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