

SC032058

Registered provider: Buckinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides residential care for up to six children who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.

The manager has been in post since May 2019 and has made an application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/11/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/04/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Inadequate
15/09/2016	Full	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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation (7)(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iv))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to</p>	30/09/2019

understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)(ix)(x))	
<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 in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to understand how to keep safe; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(ii)(b))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk for 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	30/09/2019
<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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(g)(ii))</p>	30/09/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that reflective practice discussions within</p>	30/09/2019

individual staff supervisions are recorded, including any agreed action plan.	
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Inspection judgements

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

Staff have developed caring and supportive relationships with the children who are living in the home. However, not all of the children's presenting behaviours are understood by all staff. As a result of this lack of knowledge and skills, one child's needs were not effectively responded to. Staff did not help the child to understand how to communicate their needs in a safe way. This is important in the context of the child's known vulnerabilities and the risks that have been identified. There has been some guidance provided for staff, although this has not been recorded.

Relationships between children living in the home have, at times, been a cause for concern for staff. The recording of these concerns has not been consistent. This has resulted in a lack of clear guidance for staff on how to respond to issues regarding the children's relationships. However more recently, the manager has appropriately addressed concerns, to ensure that clear guidance is provided for staff. The manager has recently reviewed the children's individual needs, which has led to a better understanding of these.

Children feel able to speak to staff if they have any worries. Staff have responded appropriately to the children's worries with effective guidance from the manager. The child-focused plans enable staff to creatively support children to engage in how they are cared for. Children are supported by staff to engage in their individual interests. This impacts positively on each child's sense of identity. Children spending time with their families is supported well by staff where it is safe to do so.

Staff work well with statutory agencies to support children's health needs. Effective work with the schools, including the virtual school, ensures that children's education is well supported. This includes individualised learning plans for children who may find it difficult to engage in mainstream education. Children have been supported to develop additional skills through engaging in work with a local children's charity.

Staff ensure that children have access to an advocate should they need one. This service is particularly effective because the advocate visits the children on a regular basis. Children have been given opportunities to share their experiences with professionals from the local authority, to help them understand their lived experiences. However, it was not possible to see how children's views impact on day-to-day life in the home.

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

When staff have not understood the presenting behaviour of one child, this has been identified through concerns shared by fellow professionals. These concerns related to observations of one member of staff's practice. The manager gave the inspector assurances that this was addressed through individual staff supervision. However, this discussion was not recorded, so it is not possible to evaluate any agreed actions. This was a missed opportunity to reflect on learning and identify any training and development needs. The manager has identified an understandable delay in the staff member completing the mandatory qualification. The delay has potentially contributed to this practice issue, as the staff member had not received the necessary training to respond appropriately to child's behaviour.

Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe where the individual identified risks are recorded. Effective risk management plans help to keep children safe. However, known risks for some children have not always been included in these plans. Staff did not have consistent guidance on how to keep children safe both within and outside the home. However, the quality of recording in this area has recently improved with the implementation of effective safety plans by the home's manager. These reflect the identified risks for each child and provide clear strategies for how to address the risk.

The home's manager has begun to develop systems for strengthening the staff's knowledge, particularly in relation to contextualised safeguarding. This has included changes to the external environment which aid staff in their monitoring of children's safety. The home's manager has begun to look systemically at safeguarding, to further develop staff practice. Working with the police and statutory agencies has ensured that the risks associated with children going missing from the home are effectively addressed. Children are consistently provided with return home interviews, which help staff to identify any risks.

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

Requirements made at the last inspection have not been fully met. This has resulted in a repeat requirement, under regulation 12, in relation to the assessment of risk. The frequency of staff supervisions has increased since the last inspection. The manager has introduced a system for recording this, which helps to identify any gaps. This is part of a systemic review of the home's recording and monitoring systems which is being carried out by the recently appointed manager.

The one complaint received since the last inspection was not effectively responded to. This related to one child complaining about the behaviour of another child. The previous manager focused on the involvement of outside agencies rather than practice in the home. Children's views were not sought in relation to finding a solution. There was no review of how staff could help the children to develop positive relationships. There were no further concerns in relation to the children's interactions.

The appointment of the manager has been received well by staff. The manager is committed to their role and is focused on the quality of care provided for children. They

bring a wealth of relevant experience to their role, which is demonstrated in their overall practice. In addition, they are reflective, and through their development plan they have identified practice improvements that can be made. The home's manager values the staff team's experience, knowledge and skills. They are enabling staff to develop in their roles. With the support of senior managers, the manager has developed a clear vision for the improvement of the home and a coherent action plan for implementing this.

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: SC032058

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Buckinghamshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP20 1UY

Responsible individual: Noel Beaumont

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Maria Lonergan: social care inspector

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