

1272657

Registered provider: Inroads Essex Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation runs this children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to four children whose primary needs are due to a learning disability or who have experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable.

The registered manager left the post on 10 June 2019. A new manager was appointed but had not registered with Ofsted. The manager left his employment following the inspection.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 10 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/10/2018	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—</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7(1)(b)(c))</p>	20/12/2019
<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—</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>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;</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(I)(b)(d))*</p>	06/12/2019
<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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the</p>	06/12/2019

<p>registered person to— 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>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>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>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(d)(f)(g)(ii)(h))*</p>	
<p>If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home—</p> <p>the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25(2)(b))</p>	14/11/2019
<p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children’s home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the</p>	20/12/2019

<p>home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—</p> <p>the name of the person so appointed; and</p> <p>the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27(1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(2)(a)(b))</p>	
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ('the quality of care review report').</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b)(5))</p>	<p>20/12/2019</p>

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Managers have failed to ensure that children live in an environment that promotes their dignity and is free from hazards. At the time of the inspection, a wardrobe in a child's bedroom was tied together with string. The string was replaced by a lock on the second day of the inspection. However, this does not encourage the child's independence. A sash window's fixings were broken, and it had not been secured to prevent it falling into the corridor, which is accessed by the children. A mattress is stored in the conservatory and is moved to a child's bed when he comes to stay at the home. This has the potential to injure a child should the mattress fall on them. Aside from the hazard, the mattress is stored in a communal area of the home. This encroaches on children's space and does not promote the child's dignity. A child's bedroom and the surrounding corridor smelt strongly of urine. The child's parent raised this concern at the child's review in June 2019. The provider has not acted to address this promptly.

Staffing levels are insufficient to ensure that children are monitored and supported in line with their care plans. Some shifts have consisted of an all-male staff team overnight. Although all-male staffing is not a concern in itself, managers have failed to consider whether there is a negative impact of this on the girls who need personal care help to manage incontinence and menstruation. A social worker said that she was not aware of agency and all-male staffing arrangements. Children do not receive care that ensures that their dignity is respected.

Children do not routinely eat together with staff. This was raised as a shortfall at the last inspection. A manager said there is not a budget for the staff to eat with the children. Failure to ensure that children benefit from important social interactions such as mealtimes means that they miss out on opportunities that other children routinely enjoy in a family home.

Arrangements for ensuring that children have good enough clothing are lacking. During the inspection, one child had three holes in her trousers and talked of having second-hand clothing. A staff member said that she brought bags of used clothing into the home for the children that her own child had outgrown. Managers were unclear about their arrangements with placing local authorities on providing clothing. These shortfalls mean that children do not experience care that helps them to develop a sense of identity and meets their individual needs.

The children enjoy a range of social activities. All the children are in education. Social workers gave positive feedback on the children's placements.

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

Staff restrain children regularly. Although the restraint is proportionate, failure to understand patterns and triggers means that not enough is done to prevent the need for it. One child was restrained 19 times in one month. Restraints are often triggered by a

specific routine. There were inconsistencies in the staff's understanding of this routine. One child is regularly restrained in a state of undress. There is no debrief following these incidents, and efforts to seek the views of the child are insufficient. The child's social worker said that she was not aware of the frequency of these incidents.

One child was restrained on the floor of a supermarket by two staff for a period of 10 to 15 minutes. Risk assessments detail that the children are unable to communicate that they are in pain. Measures to check if children require medical attention following restraint are poor. This lack of checking means that injuries arising from restraint may not be identified and acted on.

There is no impact risk assessment for the home, so risks posed by one child to another are not documented or reviewed. A child's social worker described her child as 'incredibly vulnerable to abuse' due to her learning difficulties. Lack of consideration of each child's needs and vulnerabilities when considering a new admission puts all of the children at risk of harm.

Measures for protecting children against the risk of fire were deficient. Fire doors did not close properly. These faults had been reported some months ago but not fixed. One fire door slammed shut, which poses a risk of children's fingers getting trapped. The arrangements for fire safety checks were unsafe and records showed gaps in fire checks. During the inspection, the manager arranged for the necessary repairs to be undertaken. Failure to carry out regular and comprehensive checks on the safety of the building puts children at risk of injury.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The responsible individual has failed to provide effective oversight of the home and practice, and to provide suitable supervision to the manager. The manager has failed to supervise staff effectively. These failings mean that staff have not been supported and their practice has not been scrutinised. Consequently, the quality of children's experiences has not been sufficiently considered. This has resulted in a lack of individualised care and a lack of exploration of positive behaviour management strategies, which has been detrimental to the children.

Staff who work at the home are not suitably vetted. The organisation's policy on recruitment does not contain guidance on checking the suitability of staff who have lived or worked overseas. The provider has failed to undertake relevant international checks before employing staff. Unsuitable staff have been allowed to work at the home. At the beginning of the inspection, there was no system in place to verify the identity of agency workers. This put children at risk from unsuitable adults working at the home. The responsible individual has put measures in place to address these failings since the inspection.

Poor oversight and monitoring mean that managers have not ensured that the physical environment is maintained to a satisfactory standard. The provider has not submitted the

required six-monthly monitoring report to Ofsted within the expected time frame. The report lacks essential details and does not adequately or accurately evaluate the care that children receive. Children's views are not used to inform how the home is run. The ineffectual monitoring means that the widespread shortfalls that were identified at this inspection were not known by the responsible individual or the manager and had therefore not been acted on.

The staff, children's parents and social workers spoke about communication difficulties and a lack of clarity on children's care arrangements.

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: 1272657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Inroads Essex Limited

Registered provider address: Suffolk House 7 Hydra, Orian Court Addison Way, Great Blakenham, Suffolk IP6 0LW

Responsible individual: Vivienne Norton

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Angela Weston, social care inspector

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