

1276421

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to four children and/or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2019.

Visit dates: 29 to 30 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 14 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Improved effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children are cared for by nurturing staff who meet their individual needs. Children respond positively to the staff's approach and as a result, they develop trusting bonds with their caring adults.

When children transition into the home, they are supported to reconnect with hobbies they previously enjoyed, which gives them a sense of familiarity. Children are supported to take part in a variety of new activities, presenting them with opportunities to discover new interests and have fun.

Staff have been flexible in their approach to help children who have struggled with education during lockdown. Senior leaders introduced challenges, such as a target of 10,000 steps per day for children and staff, with a reward when this was achieved, chosen by the children. This positive engagement helps children to learn to work as a team, which promotes a sense of unity.

Children are helped to understand what they need to do to promote good health during the pandemic. Children watch the Prime Minister's broadcasts with staff, which they then discuss as a group to help children understand changes to restrictions.

Staff have helped children to use a variety of technology to keep in touch with family during lockdown. This minimises disruption to children's routines and supports their well-being.

The manager arranged a trip abroad for one young person when the restrictions of lockdown eased, so that they could have a memorable holiday with staff before moving out of the home. The manager carefully considered government guidelines around travel and explained the necessary safety measures to the young person, so that they could feel confident, relaxed and enjoy themselves.

The safety of children

Staff manage known risks to children effectively and put measures in place when they identify potential risk, to help keep children protected.

The manager devised a plan for staff in the event children developed symptoms of COVID-19, to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Staff promptly implemented the plan when contraction of the virus was suspected, which included looking after a child in a holiday cottage for a period of isolation. The swift actions of staff support children's good health and help to keep them safe.

Children are held in response to crisis behaviour by appropriately trained staff who understand their needs. Children's views are sought following each incident so that staff can learn how to improve their practice. There is sometimes a delay in making

a record when a physical intervention has occurred. A requirement is made to address this.

The staff team work well together, providing children with the same expectations, so that children learn appropriate boundaries and rules, which helps them to feel safe.

Key-working sessions are used to help children understand the progress that they are making and to address issues when they arise. Incentive charts clearly define children's goals, which align with their individual care plans. Staff support children to develop positive behaviour and as a result, incidents reduce.

Leaders and managers

The manager has been registered for a year and demonstrates a good level of knowledge and skill required for the position held.

There have been several changes to the staff team. The manager understands the detrimental effect this can have on children. Staffing arrangements through lockdown have enabled children to keep in touch with staff who are required to isolate. The manager's creative approach helps to decrease anxiety and distress for children, enabling them to feel more secure.

The manager follows safer recruitment guidelines to reduce the risk of harm to children. New staff follow an induction plan to help them learn how to meet the needs of children. The manager considers the training needs of her team and arranges training accordingly.

Staff have regular supervision where they reflect on their practice and discuss any concerns. Team meetings are well attended and include group tasks designed by the manager, to enable staff to learn from each other how to achieve positive outcomes for children.

The manager challenges her staff when she identifies shortfalls in their practice, to improve the quality of care that children receive. Feedback from staff is that they feel happy, motivated and supported by the manager.

A professional gave feedback that on one occasion, the manager failed to inform them of key information relating to a child. This did not negatively affect any children. A recommendation is made to ensure that there is consistency to involve professionals in children's care.

The manager has effective auditing processes that she routinely completes to monitor and evaluate the practice of her staff. She looks for areas to improve to raise the standard of care that children receive.

The requirements made at the previous inspection have been met.

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 registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii))</p>	<p>31/10/2020</p>

Recommendations

- It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, but particularly the child's local

authority and statutory social worker. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1276421

Registered provider: Invested Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Acklam Hall, Hall Gardens, Middlesbrough TS5 7BJ

Responsible individual: Michael Bowe

Registered manager: Emma Welburn

Inspector

Paula Kelly, Social Care Inspector

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