

1254840

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care for three children aged from eight to 17 years with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obsessional compulsive disorder, specific language/communication difficulty, and sensory integration difficulties.

The manager has been at the home since November 2019, holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management and was registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

Visit dates: 8 to 9 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 11 December 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

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

Staff make sure that children receive consistent child-centred care and support that reflects children's individual needs.

Restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that children's routines have had to be adapted. This has resulted in some children becoming unsettled and anxious. Staff have used alternative communication methods, such as Makaton, and social stories to help children to understand what is happening and to reduce children's anxiety. This support has helped children to get through a challenging time in their lives because of COVID-19.

Staff understand the importance of children staying in touch with their families. Staff have supported telephone contact when restrictions have been high and promoted family home visits when it has become safe. This has helped children to sustain important links with people who are important to them.

Staff and teachers have worked well together to make sure that children's education has not been disrupted because of COVID-19 restrictions. One child was able to continue to attend school part-time, and another child has received support from a tutor. Staff have been creative in providing alternative educational activities and have accessed resources on the internet to help to bridge the gap in children's learning.

Children have enjoyed garden activities, developed their life skills and have become involved in theme nights where they have learnt about different countries and cultures. These routines have helped children to become confident and to try new experiences.

The safety of children

Staff practise in a way that supports the development of positive behaviour. This includes taking a child-centred approach and staff following comprehensive behaviour management plans and risk assessments. However, strategies implemented by staff are not always clear. This has the potential to cause inconsistency in how staff manage children's challenging behaviour.

Despite restrictions, managers have continued to respond appropriately to children's concerns and complaints. This includes by securing the full involvement of the relevant agencies so that a thorough investigation is carried out.

Staffing is sufficient to ensure that children have the appropriate level of support from a consistent staff team that knows them well. This consistency means that

staff are good at picking up on the early signs that a child is becoming anxious or upset.

Leaders and managers

The manager is an experienced child-focused practitioner who promotes good practice.

The manager advocates well for children when preparations are beginning to be made for children's moves to adult services. This challenge enables the voice of the child and their family to influence future decisions.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the manager has facilitated team meetings by using video communication. The manager has used staff supervision and appraisal opportunities to enable staff to set personal development objectives, seek advice and support and to reflect on practice. Consequently, staff have continued to receive good support during difficult times.

Staff have continued to receive training to improve their skills and knowledge. As a result, the staff's understanding of their roles in residential childcare continue to develop.

During the last six months, the independent visitor has carried out most of the visits on site. This has enabled the visitor to be able to closely monitor the progress and well-being of the children. This has been invaluable oversight to enable the safety and welfare of the children living at the home to have external scrutiny.

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 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>	04/12/2020

(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	
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Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1254840

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Off Squirrel Way,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Nicola Brown

Registered manager: Margaret Ames

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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