

SC066129

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children. The statement of purpose states that the home accommodates children aged eight to 18 who are deemed to require help in a residential specialist resource.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 16 July 2020.

Visit dates: 19 to 20 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 12 February 2020

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

The children benefit from the nurturing care delivered by adults who are well known to them. The adults understand the children's needs and communicate with them sensitively.

The children found some of the lockdown frustrating. They were sad about not being able to see their families. The staff helped them to understand why the restrictions were put in place and arranged some additional phone and video calls during the lockdown. This supported the children to maintain important relationships.

The children's views are sought and responded to. When complaints are made the manager conducts clearly recorded investigations and the children receive outcome letters. The staff have advocated for the children to ensure their rights are met. As a result, they know that their voices are heard.

Activities during the lockdown were varied. The children enjoyed a 'lockdown festival' in the garden, where they had a range of stalls and activities and camped out for the night. The staff were creative and held pizza nights, movie nights and made use of the outdoor space for various events. This ensured that the children continued to have positive experiences.

Education continued at home during the lockdown period. Tutors provided work for home schooling. More recently, the children have returned to formal education. A creative combination of tutoring and active learning has ensured that the children continued to make progress.

The safety of children

The children living at this home are safe. Well-informed adults demonstrate detailed knowledge of the children's needs. The children all describe trusted adults who they can go to if they have any worries. Clearly defined risk assessments guide the strategies that the adults follow to support the children.

The adults are adept at working therapeutically. They use team-around-the-child meetings to reflect and adapt the strategies that they use to care for the children. They have been mindful of the additional challenges that the children faced during the lockdown. They supported them to work through sibling-style rivalry and offered them opportunities to have individual attention.

The use of physical intervention, over the last few months, has been higher for some of the children. The staff attribute this to them dealing with some significant emotions about their experiences. The manager has plans in place to revisit the de-escalation part of the physical intervention training and increase the focus on relationship-based working. Some of the children have made complaints about being restrained. Not all of these have been reported to the designated officer or notified to Ofsted.

Leaders and managers

The manager is child focused. The adults share her passion for working with the children, who are at the centre of practice. The manager has high expectations of the adults. When practice has fallen short, she has taken action to address this through supervision and reviewing probation.

A core staff team has worked at the home for several years. More recently some new adults have joined the team. They speak positively about their recruitment during lockdown and the creative way that their induction took place. The organisation has made use of internet-based video calling to continue to deliver training.

The organisation's response to COVID-19 has been thorough. Clear risk management strategies are in place. Checks occur when visitors come to the home and frequent reviews are undertaken to continue to meet the current guidance. These measures contribute to ensuring that the children remain safe and healthy.

The independent visitor continued to monitor the home during the lockdown. The registered manager finds the actions set by the independent visitor useful to continue to improve practice in the home.

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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p>	29/11/2020

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(v)(vi))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	29/11/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC066129

Registered provider: Fairport Care Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Bank Chambers, 1 Central Avenue ME10 4AE

Responsible individual: Nicky Farrant-D-Wilson

Registered manager: Michelle Porter

Inspector

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

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