

2583028

Registered provider: The Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a charity. It is registered to provide residential care for four children between the ages of five and 17. According to the home's statement of purpose, it provides care for children who have some form of deafness or communication difficulties as well as needs such as behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.

The registered manager post is vacant. The acting manager is applying for registration.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. Ofsted last visited this setting on 24 and 25 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 24 and 25 March 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Not applicable

Inspection judgements

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

Children have experienced a great deal of change over the past year. The home has been relocated to new premises in another town and several members of the care team have left. New carers have been recruited; however, there is still a shortfall in the care team. Managers and carers from the provider's other residential accommodation are currently supporting the home.

The premises are in a state of development, with many blank walls and a lack of soft furnishings. Decorating has started and new furniture is being purchased.

Children's bedrooms differ in quality, for example support is lacking to help one child take pride in their room and was seen to be in a poor state. Another child's room is personalised and full of their favourite things and was seen to be a welcoming space for the child.

Three children currently live at the home. One child spoken with wants the damage in the home to be repaired and for decoration to be completed. They would also like carers to stop leaving, as they don't like getting to know new people.

Children are provided with education in line with their needs. However, one child's school placement is withdrawn due to the child's increased support needs. This child will be moving on from the home soon.

Children were seen to be relaxed and to enjoy spending time with carers during the inspection. It is evident that the atmosphere in the home is not always this calm. Several incidents have had a significant impact on both children and carers.

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

The management of safeguarding is effective. A thorough and robust approach is taken to keep children safe. There is a comprehensive response to missing from home incidents. Carers fully consider the reasons why children go missing and appropriate action is taken when this happens. For example, the relevant agencies are contacted and a multi-agency approach to reducing risk is promoted.

There have been 12 physical interventions for one child. It is not always clear that appropriate and minimal restrictive practice is used. Furthermore, debriefs with the child in line with their needs are not taking place.

Recording systems are not effective. A new IT system has recently been put into place which needs to be established. Currently, carers are unable to access important guidance easily.

There have been several medication errors in recent months. Leaders and managers are taking action to reduce the risk of further errors. Plans to address this issue are not embedded. Furthermore, Ofsted was not notified about these errors by leaders and managers.

There is no clear rationale for the use of door alarms. Care planning does not reflect how the use of this restriction is fully considered in line with children's needs.

Carers are committed to meeting the needs of children. They are seeking to promote a consistent approach during incidents, and nurturing practice is evident.

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

Leaders and managers are aware of the current shortfalls in the home. There is a clear recovery plan to help rebuild care standards for children. This includes an admission freeze, and extensive training for the entire care team.

Audits and reviews of the needs of the children, and the home itself, take place on a regular basis. This is promoting key management oversight.

There are ongoing challenges within the recruitment and retention of carers. The high turnover of carers has not provided important consistency for children. Leaders and managers are seeking to improve this.

Decision-making when children move into the home is not always robust. This has had a negative impact on all the children who live at the home. Due to a breakdown in placement one child is having to leave the home.

Guidance for staff in respect of how to manage behaviour is clear. However, not all carers have the skills to meet children's needs. For example, approximately 50% of the core team do not hold British Sign Language (BSL) level 1. Carers also lack specialist training in other areas. These include autistic spectrum disorder and complex mental health, which are known needs for some children.

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>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the use of door alarms must be assessed on an individual basis for each child. Agreement for use of these must be shared with both the placing authority and carers that hold parental responsibility.</p>	<p>9 November 2021</p>
<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</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular in, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>Carers should be trained in sign language to a good standard.</p>	<p>9 November 2021</p>

<p>Carers should also have the relevant training to meet the individual needs of each child, specifically autistic spectrum disorder and complex mental health.</p>	
<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(2))</p> <p>In particular, records must reflect that the use of restraint is proportionate, and that children’s feelings are fully considered.</p>	<p>9 November 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p> <p>In particular, medication errors and any other similar concerns must be notified to Ofsted to ensure transparency.</p>	<p>9 November 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is as homely as possible. They should seek to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression. (‘The guide to children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page15, paragraph 3.9) In particular, internal door locks should be removed unless necessary for privacy.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2583028

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Exeter Royal Academy For Deaf Education

Registered provider address: The Deaf Academy, 1 Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AU

Responsible individual: James Heaver

Registered manager: Vacant

Inspectors

Polly Soper, Social Care Inspector

Clare Nixson, Social Care Inspector

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