

SC065684

Registered provider: J & R Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to six children. There is a registered school on the same site.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in May 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 29 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 November 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/09/2018	Full	Good
21/06/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children experience well-planned care from staff who are committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with them. This makes children feel secure and cared for, which enables them to make good progress. Meaningful partnership work with the therapy and education teams provides an effective wraparound service for children.

Staff understand the importance of predictable structures and routines for children. Staff support children to engage in education at the on-site school. Children's attendance and progress in education improve when they come to live at this home. This improves their life chances.

Managers are committed to ensuring that children have placement stability. The members of the staff team are resilient when faced with challenges and stick with children through a crisis, rather than end their placement. In one example, a child's behaviour has deteriorated recently, and this has had an impact on the home. The manager has worked closely with the placing authority, and changes to the child's care plan have helped them to be more settled. The child aspires to become a professional footballer. They have the offer of a football scholarship at college next year, depending on the academic results they achieve this year. The staff are making every effort to support this child to achieve their goal. This flexible approach has reduced the risk of an unplanned ending and given the child a positive experience of repairing relationships.

Children are encouraged to explore and develop a sense of their own identity. One child is interested in writing and performing their own music. Staff supported them to go to a studio to record some of their songs. These have been uploaded on the organisation's website. Achievements are celebrated, which makes children feel valued.

Staff went to great lengths to support children's emotional well-being during the national lockdowns due to COVID-19. Staff were very creative and introduced a wide range of activities for children. Not only were the activities designed to keep children entertained, but they also helped children develop their independence skills. Learning to cook food which reflected their cultural identity was a firm favourite. Children's progress was captured in a 'wow moments' folder. Recording of children's positive experiences has continued in this way post-lockdown. Children also have individual records of their achievements which include meaningful commentary to accompany photos. Consequently, the records demonstrate a positive lived experience for children and reflect the good progress that children are making.

Diversity is welcomed and enjoyed. Staff provide strong role models for the children and there is a culture of respect and acceptance. Discriminatory behaviour is not

accepted. Children are learning essential social skills about celebrating difference which are important now and will equip them for the future.

Proactive steps are taken to work closely with children's families. One parent told the inspector that they 'can't ask for any more, in any aspect of their [the child's] care.' They said that 'communication is brilliant'. The staff frequently call to tell them when the child has done something well, as well as keeping them informed when incidents occur. An inclusive approach supports children to maintain positive relationships with their families.

Children have placement plans which focus on the priority aims for the child. However, there are some gaps in the other information which would support staff to have a more well-rounded view of children's needs. For example, one child's placement plan does not provide any information about their attendance at routine health appointments, nor how to meet their health needs. In practice, staff recognise when children need to see medical professionals, and encourage them to do so.

Managers have recognised that in some areas of the home, the decor is tired and in need of updating. Plans for redecoration are in place.

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

Safeguarding children is a priority. Staff are attuned and responsive to the risks that are present for children individually, and as a group.

Managers recognise the importance of learning from safeguarding incidents. They carry out thorough investigations, involving external safeguarding agencies when necessary. They ensure that learning is shared with the wider staff team, and that changes to practice are embedded. This responsive approach reduces the risk that potentially harmful situations will reoccur.

Placing authorities speak highly of the work carried out to help children become increasingly safe. One child has engaged in a programme of mentoring sessions to support them to learn about the risks of gang culture and knife crime. The sessions were arranged by managers in response to concerns about the child's vulnerability to exploitation, linked to a high number of missing-from-care episodes. The independent reviewing officer for the child told the inspector that, in their view, the staff are doing everything they can to reduce the risk of the child going missing. Observations during the inspection, and records of missing-from-care episodes, demonstrate that there is a robust response from staff to ensure that the child returns safely when they go missing.

Managers have not made sure that risk assessment records fully demonstrate how new children's needs can be safely met, and how their needs are considered alongside those of children already living at the home. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate that careful risk assessment and matching take place.

Safe recruitment practices are understood and implemented by the managers and staff responsible for this area of practice. Until recently, managers were not routinely exploring candidates' reasons for leaving all previous positions involving work with children and vulnerable adults. The recruitment process has been amended and now includes this important level of scrutiny about staff conduct and performance in their previous work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers are passionate in their efforts to be good role models and trusted figures for the children and for the staff. Staff describe a culture which promotes mutual respect. A thoughtful and inclusive approach from managers promotes a positive ethos where children benefit from genuine care.

Staff report excellent support from managers. However, protected times for staff to spend with managers, such as supervision sessions and team meetings, are irregular in their frequency. As a result, there is a scarcity of records which demonstrate how the registered manager is making sure that all staff have space to reflect on practice and develop a shared understanding of how to safely meet children's needs in line with their care plans and risk assessments. In practice, staff know the children well and provide safe care.

There are shortfalls in management monitoring. One example relates to records of children who go missing from care. Records do not consistently demonstrate whether return home interviews have been offered. A further example relates to records of restraint. The quality of the records is inconsistent. Staff do not always fully describe the exact nature of the physical intervention that they have applied. The registered manager does not have effective systems to provide sufficient oversight and scrutiny to ensure best practice in these areas.

Only a small proportion of staff working at the home have the necessary qualifications as required by the Children's Homes (England) Regulations (2015). The remaining staff are working towards achieving the qualification and are on target to do so within the required timescales.

The system for recording staff training attendance does not currently demonstrate that all staff have received training that is relevant to the needs of the children that they are looking after. Staff have attended training to give them the knowledge and skills they need, but this is undermined by a shortfall in training records.

Working in partnership with other professionals is given high priority. Managers keep other professionals fully informed about children's progress. Managers proactively advocate for children and challenge decisions made by other professionals when they believe that those decisions are not made with children's best interests in mind.

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 health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, placement plans should reliably inform staff how to meet children’s health needs.</p>	31 December 2021
<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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that impact risk assessments demonstrate how new children’s needs can be safely met and are considered alongside those of children already living at the home.</p>	31 December 2021
<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>	31 December 2021

<p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, 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;</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)(c)(h))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that management monitoring systems demonstrate oversight of records of restraint, episodes of going missing and staff training attendance.</p>	
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(x))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered manager must ensure that staff regularly attend supervision sessions and team meetings to enable focused discussions about supporting children in line with their care plans and risk assessments.</p>	<p>31 December 2021</p>

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: SC065684

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: J & R Care Limited

Registered provider address: Ash House South, Longfield, Kent DA3 8JF

Responsible individual: Jane Parish

Registered manager: Eric De Mel

Inspector

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

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