

1211772

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to six children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2020.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

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 **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: 23 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children are cared for by a consistent group of staff. This helps children to form positive and trusting relationships. Professionals working in partnership with the service spoke about seeing 'lovely, warm relationships between the staff and the children'. During the inspection, the children received a postcard from a member of staff who had recently moved abroad. This token let the children know that staff still care. However, the delivery of care is not consistently therapeutic and nurturing, with children experiencing feelings of blame.

The manager is an advocate for the children. The manager challenges education professionals when children's plans do not provide them with the education that they need. Ineffective education plans mean that some children are not supported to achieve their potential and career aspirations. Some children's education timetables are restricted, despite their local authorities funding the home to provide an education service. Other children experience well-coordinated and executed transitions to secondary school. This helps children to feel prepared and confident about starting their new school.

Children are not always prepared for their moves out of the home, and this heightens their anxieties. Children are reluctant to develop their skills or practice independent living tasks, including living off a restricted budget. In these circumstances, staff do not effectively support children to develop the resilience and skills that they need.

The manager and staff help children to build relationships with their families. These people will form the child's support network as they enter adulthood. The manager challenges children's placing authorities when their decision-making around children spending time with their families does not support children's progress.

Children attend routine health appointments and staff respond to the children's presenting medical needs. The children's emotions impact on their day-to-day well-being and this can result in children harming themselves. Children are receiving therapy to provide additional clinical support.

Friendships are important to the children, and they enjoy the time that they spend with their friends. Staff know the children's friends and routinely meet them when dropping children off. Children also like to spend time with the staff and, together, they enjoy a range of activities. This helps children to develop their social skills.

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

After a prolonged period of stability one child has started to go missing from the home and staff report these incidents to the police. However, staff do not go and search for the child, despite this being a necessary and directed action in the child's risk assessment to mitigate risk.

In response to children's vulnerabilities and emotional health, the staff are required to complete welfare checks. Staff are still not consistently recording when they have visually seen or made telephone contact with children while they are in the community with friends or spending time alone in their bedrooms. This places children at potential risk of harm.

Risk assessments provide staff with the necessary guidance on how to support children when they are in crisis. This includes understanding the impact of children's emotional health and well-being and managing associated risks, for example self-harm. Staff have undertaken some learning around ligatures, but additional training is being sourced to ensure the staff can confidently respond to a ligature incident.

There are occasions when staff's comments to children trigger emotional responses and upset children. This is because staff do not always ensure that they have a comprehensive overview of the children's current needs and worries when they come back into work following time off.

Allegations of historical abuse are effectively managed and children receive the support that they need when these matters are investigated. However, during the inspection a child raised concerns about staff conduct. The manager was unaware of the issues, as staff had failed to report this potential allegation. This questions the transparency within the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a registered manager who is suitably qualified. The manager's confidence is growing, as she continues to be assisted by the senior leadership team to develop her ability to lead and manage the staff. Together with senior leaders, the manager is responding to lessons learned from previous inspections. Staff report that this has improved the quality of care in the home.

The manager is working in partnership with professionals and families and this engagement supports the development of the children's care plans. One parent identifies how the manager went above and beyond to understand their child's life experiences and current needs. The parent said, 'This is the best home that our daughter has lived in.' They also report that communication is very good with the manager.

External monitoring is routinely completed each month for this home. This provides children with access to an independent person who spends time interacting with and

observing children and staff, gathering their views, wishes and feelings. However, there is a consistent absence of feedback from parents and carers. This is a missed opportunity to gather insight into the safety and well-being of children and gain feedback to support the development of the home.

The manager has developed her use of monitoring tools to improve her oversight of the home. She has processes and procedures to review the children's records and encourage reflective practice. The introduction of 'seven-minute briefings' refresh staff knowledge around safeguarding. Formal supervision helps staff to keep safeguarding at the forefront of their practice. However, staff still require additional training to further their knowledge and understanding of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to better support children.

The recruitment of staff has been a challenge for this home. Members of the same family work at this home, and therefore policies and procedures detail the professional boundaries and practice expectations. Safer recruitment procedures are undertaken by the human resources team. The manager does not have the necessary oversight of staff recruitment records to ensure there are no gaps in this information before staff start caring for the 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(b)(vi))</p>	2 September 2022
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (Regulation 8 (1))</p>	2 September 2022
<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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v))</p>	2 September 2022
<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>promotes their welfare.</p>	2 September 2022

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(b) (2)(g)(ii))</p>	
<p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))</p>	2 September 2022

Recommendations

- The registered provider should ensure that the staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, specifically about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and ligature training. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice, including having oversight and accountability for safer recruitment for newly appointed staff. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1211772

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: The Forge, Church Street West, Woking, Surrey
GU21 6HT

Responsible individual: Kerry Maynard

Registered manager: Rachel Ridley

Inspector

Jennifer Fenlon, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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