

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. It is owned and run by a private organisation. There were six children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in May 2017.

The children living at the home attend the organisation's school, which is located on the same site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2022

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: 2 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2021	Full	Good
10/12/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/04/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are being cared for by staff who develop positive, trusting relationships with each child. While children sometimes struggle to live together harmoniously, they are supported to express themselves in a way which promotes relationships based on trust and respect. As a result, there is a relaxed atmosphere, which supports children to make good progress.

Children experience sensitive care and therapy, which enables them to make good progress in relation to their emotional well-being. The social workers for two of the children have recently written letters of thanks to the home. Due to traumatic early life experiences, both children displayed aggressive behaviour towards adults before they arrived. One social worker said that since living at the home the child had 'blossomed' and put this down to the 'warmth and love' that the child had received from staff. Nurturing support helps children to feel safe to talk to adults about how they are feeling and to accept support when they need it.

Staff support children to engage in education at the on-site school and achievements are celebrated. One child has recently been supported to successfully move from school to college. The child spoke positively about his experience of college. There are plans in place to help the child learn how to safely travel to college independently. Staff help children to identify and achieve their personal goals and this helps to prepare children to live more independently in the future.

Children are encouraged to explore and develop a sense of their own identity. They are successfully encouraged to participate in community-based activities and clubs. This enables them to explore their individual talents and to make friendships outside the home. Children also receive sensitive and well-informed support to help them feel safe to explore their sexual identity. Staff have created a culture which expands children's interests and where diversity is celebrated.

Overall, staff ensure that children receive support to meet their health needs. However, on one occasion during this inspection period, a child was injured in an assault by another child, and they were not offered immediate medical support. Managers have demonstrated learning from this incident in order to improve the experiences and care provided to children. The learning has been shared with the wider staff team. This responsive approach reduces the risk of a recurrence.

Children's day-to-day care is not as individualised as it could be. During the inspection, two children told the inspector that they are frustrated about the bedtime routine. They said that all children, regardless of their age, are asked to go to their bedrooms at the same time. They do not have free access to communal areas after this time. Managers confirmed that the children have recently raised the same issue with them and that they are in the process of making changes to daily routines to ensure they promote more age-appropriate freedom and choice.

There have been some improvements to the decor of the home. However, some areas need further improvement to provide children with a comfortable and homely environment.

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

Staff know the children well and they prioritise children's safety and well-being. Positive behaviour is noticed and rewarded. The use of physical restraint and consequences is kept to a minimum. One child told the inspector that he liked it here because he 'can make mistakes and move on from them'.

Incidents of children going missing from home are extremely rare. Records of missing-from-care episodes for a child who has now left the home demonstrate that there is a robust response from staff to ensure that children return safely when they go missing.

Children are protected from unsafe use of social media and the internet. On one occasion, staff became concerned that a child was putting himself at risk of harm online, and they took swift and effective action. Managers and staff have gone to great lengths to help the child understand why they were worried about him and to teach him how to stay safe online.

Incidents where children are at risk of harm are rare. When they do occur, they are generally managed well, with external safeguarding agencies involved when necessary. However, there was an incident recently which was dealt with quickly to ensure the child's safety, but there was a delay in the incident being reported to the local authority designated officer. This was a missed opportunity for timely, independent scrutiny of the safety plans that were put in place to safeguard the child.

Written records and plans do not reflect the good quality of care and protection provided to children. Children's risk assessments do not clearly identify the risks and safety plans. Matching documents do not clearly demonstrate how compatibility in relation to the needs of all children is considered when new children move into the home. This shortfall does not currently have a significant impact on the quality of care provided to children. This is because staff know children well, understand their needs and provide safe care. A requirement was made in relation to this shortfall at the last inspection and is restated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has close, trusting relationships with children due to the amount of time he spends with them. His commitment to listening to children means that their views are integral to all decisions about the day-to-day running of the home. He understands the children's lived experience of care and uses this to shape care practice.

The registered manager is very clear about the progress children are making and has high aspirations for what they can achieve. He is sharply focused on effecting significant change for children to improve their life chances. He works closely with children's placing authorities to ensure that there is a shared understanding of children's progress and plans for their future.

Staff speak very positively about the support they receive from managers. They report feeling valued, respected and inspired to provide high-quality care to children.

Managers have a keen focus on care practice and, apart from the shortfalls in some written plans, they have good oversight and demonstrate a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They recognised shortfalls in the level of scrutiny provided by the previous independent person and have taken steps to address this. Managers understand the importance of making good use of the independent person's reports to ensure that they have a well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact that the care is having on their outcomes.

Staff receive regular supervision and good-quality training that is relevant to the needs of the children that they are looking after. However, supervision records do not fully demonstrate that staff are supported to resolve practice-related issues. Children are being cared for by knowledgeable, well-informed staff, but this is undermined by shortfalls in recording of staff supervision.

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. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that if there is suspicion that a child has sustained an injury, they are offered access to medical professionals without delay.</p>	<p>30 November 2022</p>
<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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that external safeguarding agencies are contacted without delay when safeguarding incidents occur.</p>	<p>30 November 2022</p>
<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>30 November 2022</p>

This is with specific reference to ensuring that individual risk assessments contain the required detail to reliably inform staff how to keep children safe, and compatibility risk assessments demonstrate how new children's needs are considered alongside those of children already living at the home.

This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a homely, domestic environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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, Centre Road, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent DA3 8JF

Responsible individual: Jane Parish

Registered manager: Eric De Mel

Inspector

Helen Simmons, Social Care Inspector

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