

1213828

Registered provider: Inspire Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company and cares for up to three children who may have social or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since January 2022.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 October 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 **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: 21 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2020	Full	Good
03/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children are making progress. Children said that they liked living in the home but, on occasions, staff were not consistent. Family members and professionals agree that staff understand and support the children. Children are able to spend time with their families and children say that they see their families regularly.

Children are provided with a variety of activities and can choose how they spend their time. One child has been supported to attend horse riding lessons and to volunteer at a horse charity, and another has been supported to attend sports clubs and Cubs. Children were also observed baking together for their film night.

All children are enrolled in education provisions and attend daily. One child has been in school on a part-time basis for seven months. Staff support this child to complete schoolwork at home in the afternoons. However, managers and staff have not challenged the local authority or school to advocate for the child's educational needs. This means that the child does not have full access to a qualified teacher and is missing out on academic and social learning.

Children who have a plan to move out of the home to semi-independence have not been supported to learn independence skills. One child who has moved from the home to semi-independent living had an independence plan that was largely incomplete. Children who are currently living in the home say that they would like more support to help them develop their independent living skills.

When children have moved out of the home, they have done so with a basic transition plan. These plans should be more robust to detail for staff and children the support that is available before, during and after a move.

Children do receive direct work to support them with social and emotional learning. Many of these sessions are in reaction to incidents that have taken place, rather than proactive work to support children to learn skills. The quality of direct work sessions has improved in recent months, but actions identified in these are not always followed through.

The home and garden areas require attention. Several maintenance issues need to be addressed as a priority. Some of these issues have been raised by the home's independent person for several months but have yet to be actioned.

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

Professionals and family members say that staff communicate well with them and keep them informed of their child's well-being. Staff attend meetings for the children and contribute to their care planning.

Missing-from-home procedures are followed when children go missing. All children have a missing-from-home support plan, with clear steps to take should a child go missing. However, risks of exploitation are not addressed appropriately. One child was identified as being a victim of exploitation, but the managers and staff were unclear about previous information and how the agreed strategies in place would minimise known risk factors. Although some risks are identified for other children, direct work is not completed to support the children to understand the risks they may face and the safety factors available to keep themselves safe when out in the community.

Risk assessments show what strategies children may respond well to, but lack concrete steps for staff to take should an incident arise. Risk assessments are not always signed by all staff, leaving children open to harm when staff working with them do not know their current risks or behaviour-support strategies.

Appropriate steps have not been taken following incidents of bullying. While these incidents have not occurred often, when bullying has happened, the child being bullied was given a risk assessment but no support. The child who did the bullying had no work done and no risk assessment put in place.

Records are completed and evaluated following an incident. However, children are not always spoken to as part of this evaluation. Some information is inconsistent across different forms for the same incident.

There have been very few restraints. When a child has been restrained, the holds have been minimal and appropriate. The records of restraint have some key information missing, such as the length of time that the child was restrained for, and there is no evidence of a debrief with the child or the staff involved. This is a missed opportunity to monitor and support safe care practices.

Children are given both positive and negative consequences. The recording of this is inconsistent and is not restorative in nature. Negative consequences are sometimes given for a long time considering a child's age, and when monies are removed the amount is not recorded or the length of repayment. In addition, children are not given the opportunity to earn back things that have been removed.

When contemplating new children coming into the home, the needs of the current children are considered. However, there is little evidence of leaders and managers considering the current skills and experience of the staff team and if they can meet the needs of the child.

Safer recruitment procedures have not been consistently adhered to. New staff members have not been made aware of whistle-blowing and safeguarding policies as part of the induction process. This leaves children at risk of harm.

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

Staff appear to have caring relationships with the children. Inspectors observed one staff member dancing with a child and face painting with all three children, and other staff members spent time baking with the children. Staff report feeling supported by each other and by managers.

There is a consistent staff team in the home and staff have appropriate qualifications and training to work with children. Staff do have access to supervision. However, the person supervising the staff has not had an opportunity to attend training in this area. The responsible individual was unaware of this shortfall.

Staff and managers receive adequate training opportunities, with specific training relevant to the needs of the children. Team meetings are held monthly with a clear agenda, but there is no evidence of learning and development in these meetings.

There is little evidence that the registered manager is present in the home, with one child stating that he is 'never here anymore'. The manager was unable to find key documents for the children and had to rely on the deputy manager to find and explain these. The staff rotas indicate that the manager has not been in the home since September. Management oversight is lacking, with missing and unsigned risk assessments, lack of follow through with direct work, and inconsistent accounts of incidents.

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, the 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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—</p> <p>seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child’s needs;</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority’s or a relevant person’s performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child’s needs are met in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that appropriate challenge is provided to the local authority and school when children’s meetings are not held and children’s best interests are not being met.</p>	28 December 2022
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</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.</p>	28 December 2022

<p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vi))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that children who have a plan for semi-independence are supported in developing their independent living skills.</p>	
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(viii)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staff are regularly advocating for children’s educational needs to be met in full.</p>	<p>28 December 2022</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</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;</p>	<p>28 December 2022</p>

<p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;</p> <p>communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;</p> <p>help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;</p> <p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;</p> <p>strive to gain each child’s respect and trust;</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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(x))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that each child’s behaviour management plan is linked to the risk assessment and shows specific steps for staff to take should an incident occur. Ensure that children receive appropriate support following incidents of bullying.</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>28 December 2022</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;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; and</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that necessary risk assessments are in place and contain steps for staff to follow should an incident arise. Ensure that all new staff are made aware of whistle-blowing and safeguarding policies before working with children. Ensure that all incident forms link to corresponding logbook entries, consequence records, and children’s daily logs. Ensure that the home is safe and free from hazards, and maintenance concerns are escalated effectively.</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, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	<p>28 December 2022</p>

<p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</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)(f)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that the manager is present in the home and has oversight of work being completed. Ensure that research and developments are brought into team meetings.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	<p>28 December 2022</p>

<p>Specifically, ensure that full, independent references are sourced for employees. If references cannot be sourced after all avenues are exhausted, a risk assessment should be put in place to provide additional oversight of the employee.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p>	<p>28 December 2022</p>

<p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that all records for behaviour management have all required documentation. Ensure that children are spoken to by someone independent to determine their feelings about incidents.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that all staff are aware of changes to children’s records.</p>	28 December 2022
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4;</p> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that the rota is accurate and up to date.</p>	28 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child has a thorough transition plan that indicates what staff will do to support the transition before, during and after. (Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’ page 57, paragraph 11.9)

- The registered person should ensure that all children receive proactive direct work to help them understand how to keep themselves safe. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 42, paragraph 9.7)

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: 1213828

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Inspire Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 3 Craig Court, Standish Street, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1GJ

Responsible individual: Paul Keogh

Registered manager: Barrie McDonnell

Inspector

Aislinn Cooper, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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