

1271467

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a national private provider of education and social care.

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children. The provider states in the statement of purpose that this home provides care for children between the ages of seven and 17 years. These children may have autism spectrum disorder and associated difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

There is a new manager in post.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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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: 4 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/11/2021	Full	Good
05/11/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
12/06/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

One child has lived in the home for almost three years. They attend school and wish to move on to college. They are ambitious about their future. In the main, their views shared with the inspector indicate that they feel settled in the home. They said that changes in staffing arrangements are difficult for them. Their social worker provided positive feedback about the child's progress and experiences.

The child is moving towards adulthood. However, there is not a clear plan in place for their future. This causes the child to feel anxious as they do not know what will happen in the next stages in their life. Due to changes in staffing arrangements, the child has experienced a period without focused support to develop skills needed for independence. This is not helping the child to prepare for adulthood.

The other child has lived in the home for a short period of time. From their starting point, there is an early indication that they are responding to some of the care provided. This includes improved social development and attending an education provision.

However, the child's more complex needs are not understood well. A joined-up approach to understanding and responding to the child's needs is not in place. Strategies to support the child's specific health and well-being needs are ineffective. This is having a detrimental impact across different areas of their life. There is a lack of challenge to services to ensure that the child's needs are met.

Both children enjoy activities. This includes one child playing in a football team and enjoying go-karting. The provider has supported the other child to develop friendships with children at their other homes. However, children are not regularly engaged in after-school activities, and often spend time in their bedrooms. This limits opportunities for children to develop new interests and develop their potential.

Children's positive experiences and achievements are not captured well. Children's memory books are not up to date, nor are they collated in a way that is meaningful for them.

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

Children's risk assessments are not succinctly recorded. However, separate protocols provide clear guidance to staff to respond to specific areas of risk effectively. These include strategies to ensure that children develop safe relationships while living together. However, daily records provide insufficient detail to identify whether these strategies are implemented by staff consistently.

Restraint is used as a last resort. There have been a few occasions when restraint has been used to manage children's behaviour. When restraint is used, incident records are detailed and demonstrate the measures used to reduce harm effectively.

At times of increased stress, one child leaves the home to manage their emotions. In the main, staff ensure that the child remains in their sight. They support the child to return home safe and well. On two occasions, when the home's protocol has not been followed, staff responses to locate the child have not been robust. The manager said that they have discussed this with the staff involved. When appropriate, return home interviews for the child have been requested.

The previous requirement made, relating to recruitment procedures to ensure that adults working in the home are safe, is met. However, gathering information to ensure the suitability of staff working in the home is not always comprehensive. For instance, the manager was not informed about the experience and skills of agency workers who provide support in the home at night.

The manager responds to any concerns about care promptly. This includes the sharing of information with appropriate agencies.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

During this inspection, the inspector observed a warm and nurturing relationship between the manager and one child. The manager demonstrated an informed understanding of the children's past experiences and their specific needs. However, leaders and managers have not taken effective action to ensure that children's care and experiences are continually improved.

There are significant shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home. This is compounded by insufficient staffing, which negatively impacts the new manager's capacity to develop in their role. They have not submitted their application to register with Ofsted in a timely way.

Areas of the home are not maintained to a good standard. One child needs more support to help them maintain their bedroom to ensure that it is a clean and nurturing environment for them. The hygiene of the other child's bedroom is extremely poor. This does not demonstrate quality of care that treats children with dignity and respect, nor does it help them to feel valued.

Supervision records were not available to the inspector during this inspection. Staff discussions did not show the depth of experience or skills required to meet children's needs effectively. In addition, daily records do not reflect children's everyday lives or the care provided to them. Many records do not include management oversight to provide evidence that the quality of care provided in the home is regularly monitored.

The manager acknowledged the shortfalls identified during the inspection. The responsible individual said that they are supporting the manager to improve the home.

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>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; and</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation (5)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must take sufficient action, linking with relevant agencies, to ensure that care planning is comprehensive and children's needs are met effectively.</p>	17 February 2023
<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>	31 January 2023

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background;</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> <p>provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)(vii))</p> <p>This directly relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children’s bedrooms are clean and comfortable.</p> <p>In addition, leaders and managers must ensure that care planning supports children to develop skills that prepare them to move into adulthood.</p>	
<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; and</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p>	<p>17 February 2023</p>

<p>understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding;</p> <p>take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; and</p> <p>understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) 2(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to leaders and managers ensuring that children's health needs are understood, and strategies are used effectively to improve their health and well-being.</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>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</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.</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)(a)(c)(d)(f)(h))</p>	<p>17 February 2023</p>

This directly relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the quality of care provided to children is monitored. This is to ensure that the staff team is sufficiently skilled and experienced to understand and support children's needs and promote their welfare effectively.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children's life story records are collated in a way that is meaningful for children and kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)

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: 1271467

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: Paul Collins

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Louise Bacon, Social Care Inspector

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