

1214396

Registered provider: River Valley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to two children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home has a new manager, who has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of last inspection: 26 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/10/2021	Full	Good
03/12/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Good
22/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff build good relationships with the children living in the home. Children said that they like living in the home.

The staff encourage children to attend and make progress at school. When children do not attend an educational setting full-time, staff work hard to increase their attendance. This includes creating incentive charts and working closely with teachers to identify manageable objectives and timetables. This support improves children's opportunities for learning.

Children are encouraged to become more independent according to their ages and abilities. For example, they learn to manage their finances, prepare some of their own meals and tidy their bedrooms. In addition, staff ensure that children gain the right support to prepare them for the next stages of their lives. As a result, children become more confident and ready for adult life.

Children benefit from a range of activities that offer them new opportunities and enhance their social experiences. These include rock climbing, camping, rafting and fishing. Furthermore, one child was supported by staff to experience flying a plane. As a result, children are making long-lasting memories, learning new skills and having fun.

The staff promote time spent with family and friends. Parents are pleased with the care that their children receive. One child's parent spoke highly about the staff, who keep them well informed, and praised the staff's consistent approach, which has allowed her child to build positive relationships in the home.

The home environment requires attention. Children's bedrooms were observed to be kept to a good standard. However, some of the radiators and window ledges were stained, and there were marks on the walls. During the inspection, the manager explained that there are plans for redecoration to take place.

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

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are well understood by staff, and written assessments and plans are in place to manage and reduce risks.

Incidents of children going missing are rare, despite this being a risk for children previously. If there has been an incident where a child has gone missing, this has been responded to appropriately. Timely information-sharing with the police and the placing authority has ensured that procedures are followed to safeguard the children. When children return, staff are considerate of the children's needs and give

them the opportunity to share their feelings. This ensures that children feel supported and helps the manager to gather information to reduce future risks.

Staff respond to challenging behaviour appropriately. Since the last inspection, there have been no physical interventions. Staff use incentives effectively, including praise and individualised reward charts. These focus on mutually agreed targets and provide the children with the opportunity to gain extra pocket money. This helps children understand the impact of their choices.

Medication is appropriately stored and administered. The manager completes regular audits to ensure that if there are any discrepancies, these are identified and appropriate action is taken. As a result, medication practices in the home are safe.

Staff carry out regular health and safety checks to ensure that the home is physically safe. The home has a location risk assessment; however, it does not consider data about criminal activity in the local area. This is a missed opportunity to fully review the home's location.

The home has motion sensors. There is no assessment of the need for this measure. As a result, there is a possibility that monitoring systems may be used unnecessarily.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in the day-to-day management of the home. A new manager has been appointed, who has applied for registration with Ofsted. The manager acknowledged the shortfalls identified during this inspection and provided reassurances that improvements will be made.

Feedback from external professionals is positive. They spoke of good working relationships and said that the manager has a good understanding of the needs and experiences of the children.

The manager has not ensured that children's records are kept fully up to date and include all the information they need, including plans for one child who is moving on from the home and records of how one child's health needs are being met.

The manager understands the importance of a skilled workforce. All staff are up to date with mandatory training. In addition, training has been sourced to help the staff understand the specific needs of the children.

The staff team is stable. Since the last inspection, no staff have left and only one new member of staff has been recruited. Safer recruitment checks are in place. However, the manager failed to identify inaccuracies in one staff member's employment history.

The quality of individual supervision that staff receive is variable. Staff told the inspector that they feel supported. However, despite being in day-to-day management of the home, the current manager could not provide records showing that he has received supervision. This means it is not clear how the manager has been supported and fails to demonstrate that reflection on practice has taken place. This was raised at the last inspection and is repeated.

The manager has not completed a quality of care review. This is a missed opportunity to consider the experiences of children living in the home and assist the manager in carrying out quality assurance in 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>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; and</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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>The specifically relates to the home being appropriately decorated, maintained and clean.</p>	<p>24 May 2023</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	<p>24 May 2023</p>

<p>This specifically relates to ensuring that records for children are clear, in particular transition planning for managers demonstrate child-centred planning when children moving into and out of the home.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once a year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))</p>	<p>24 May 2023</p>
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to completed a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))</p>	<p>24 May 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any monitoring equipment has a written policy describing how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home, in accordance with regulation 24. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that the location review includes the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1214396

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: River Valley Care Limited

Registered provider address: The Stables, Chestnut Farm, Cuxham, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5ND

Responsible individual: Quentin Carson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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