

# 1213828

Registered provider: Inspire Children's Services Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who may have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager has been in post since December 2022 and her application for registration with Ofsted is currently in process.

**Inspection date:** 27 March 2023

**Date of last inspection:** 25 October 2022

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

## **Findings from the inspection**

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

### **The care of children**

Since the last inspection, the same three children have remained living here and they continue to make progress. However, there have been a number of staff changes as staff have moved on from the home, for a variety of reasons. This inevitably leads to instability for children, as those staff they have established positive relationships with are no longer working at the home.

Children attend school regularly. One child has moved schools since the last inspection and is making very good progress in their new school, which is more suited to their needs. Older children are completing vocational courses and thinking about what they want to do when they leave school.

Children live in a welcoming family environment. There has been some refurbishment of the home since the last inspection. This includes a new kitchen and new flooring in the bathroom, and the rear garden has been tidied, ready for children to spend time there in the summer. Children's bedrooms are also individually personalised. This helps children to develop a sense of belonging.

Children are supported to develop positive relationships with each other, although they can sometimes be irritated by each other's behaviours. When incidents do occur, staff spend time with each child and carry out restorative work with them, helping them to see the situation from the other child's perspective. This has helped to improve their relationships. However, the same approach has not been taken when incidents have involved children and staff, potentially leaving unresolved issues that resurface later.

Children receive support to keep in touch with people who are important to them. They are helped to engage in activities of interest to them. Staff also ensure that children's health needs are met, providing appropriate support in line with children's age and independence.

### **The safety of children**

Children are not engaging in risk-taking behaviour. They do not put themselves at risk by going missing from the home or misusing drugs or alcohol. However, they remain vulnerable to exploitation and staff remain alert to this. Older children have mobile phones and access to the internet, but appropriate safeguards ensure that they use these devices safely.

Children benefit from behaviour support plans which ensure that staff know the best way to support each child. Children also have individualised incentive plans that reward progress in identified areas. Some low-level physical intervention has been required when children have been unable to regulate their behaviours. Records demonstrate the need for the intervention and contain the required detail. However, identified follow-up work with children has not always been completed.

CCTV is installed on the outside of the property, as well as monitoring internally at the entry to the home and overnight outside children's bedrooms. The appropriate consents have not been maintained for this. Furthermore, there is no CCTV policy outlining who can access the footage or how long it will be retained for. In addition, a key is currently required to unlock the back door to the home, potentially resulting in children being unable to exit the home in the event of an emergency.

Shortfalls in staff recruitment were identified at the last inspection and concerns remain. A discrepancy in employment dates between an individual's application and dates given by referees had not been identified or explored. Furthermore, the manager was unable to locate records relating to the induction of new employees.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers**

There have been changes to the management arrangements since the last inspection. The new manager was the former deputy, so knows the children and staff well. She has the necessary qualifications and experience. She has applied for registration with Ofsted.

The home has not had a deputy manager since the manager was promoted. This, along with staff shortages, has impacted on the manager's ability to devote time to the monitoring and development of the home. Shortfalls in the manager's monitoring and oversight of the home are evident. This includes missing information and failing to identify that medication records had not been fully completed.

The staffing situation is improving. Recruitment is ongoing and staffing shortfalls have been covered either by staff from other homes or by using agency staff. However, staff rotas do not always contain the specific details of the relief staff who have worked in the home, as required by regulation.

Staff meetings take place monthly and the manager has introduced a discussion at each meeting about a particular topic or area of research. One recent topic discussed was county lines, including indicators of concern to remain alert to. This helps to further develop staff knowledge and keep them updated.

Action has been taken to meet six of the requirements and two recommendations made at the last inspection. However, sufficient action has not been taken to address four requirements made at the last inspection and these have been restated.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/02/2020	Full	Good

## 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 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>ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the 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)(e)(f)(h))</p> <p>Specifically, that a stable staff team is established, reparation work is completed between children and staff following an incident and that the manager’s oversight identifies effectively and addresses actions that need completing in the home.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	<p>8 May 2023</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>8 May 2023</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>Specifically, ensure that gaps in employment are identified and explored and that full records are maintained regarding staff induction.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	
<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 the rota is accurate and up to date.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	8 May 2023
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	8 May 2023

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</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)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, that the external door to the rear of the home has a thumb-turn lock to enable children to exit the home in the event of a fire.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, consents are required for the use of internal door sensors and external CCTV. Also, a CCTV policy is required that is clear about access and retention of recorded footage.</p>	<p>8 May 2023</p>

## 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:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector



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