

1234621

Registered provider: Aspris Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for five children with emotional and social difficulties aged between eight and 18 years old.

The qualified experienced manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/07/2022	Full	Good
22/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/09/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, four children were living at the home. Two children have moved on since the last inspection. One child moved back to their parent and the other child had a planned move to another home. Children receive good care. There is a calm and warm atmosphere and staff use humour and playfulness in working with children who have experienced trauma.

Children are supported in education at mainstream schools, colleges and alternative provision. The deputy and manager consistently communicate with other professionals regarding plans for education provision. The manager understood that to maintain consistency and in line with one child's wishes, the child needed to attend school some distance away. Staff made the long journey daily with the child. Two children were struggling to attend school due to their cultural beliefs. The manager liaised regularly with their school and the children were visited regularly by school staff to check on welfare and look at their learning needs. The children's social worker said, 'I value the input that staff have with the children given the challenges due to the children's lack of engagement.' One child spoke with great enthusiasm about a career in the Royal Air Force and is applying to start their post-16 journey.

Children's cultural needs are very well understood by the manager and staff team. The specific cultural needs of two children are regularly discussed within a network of professionals. An advocate ensured that the children's voices are heard. Staff find creative and thoughtful ways of working with children who have specific beliefs.

Feedback from professionals, parents and children is positive. One child has been reunified with their parent. The parent said, 'The home was very supportive. I could not fault [the staff] in any way. They were always so kind and helpful. They looked after my child very well. All the staff are great.'

Children spoke about their positive relationships with their key workers and feeling well supported. One social worker said, 'I consider the home's strength to be in their communication as this is timely and provides clear and relevant information.'

Children benefit from living in a well maintained and spacious home. Bedrooms are personalised and individual to children's needs. A professional from a placing authority said, 'The home is a lovely warm environment.' There is a current annex which is being used as storage. There are plans to develop this into further accommodation for those children moving into adulthood.

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

Children are well looked after by a safe and well-trained staff team. Recruitment checks are strong. Staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They are confident to raise concerns to keep children safe.

There have been no episodes of being missing from care for the children currently living at the home. For those children who have moved on from the home, there were some missing-from-care episodes. Staff were responsive and managed the situations well. Debriefs and missing-from-care chats were followed up with external professionals.

Detailed behaviour support plans guide staff in managing difficult behaviours. Risk assessments are comprehensive, clear for staff to understand and updated regularly. Staff manage incidents that can cause heightened emotions very well.

The risks in the local area are highlighted in a detailed location risk assessment. Staff liaised closely with the local policing team to discuss exploitation risks. This enabled good communication and risk management before children moved to the home.

One physical intervention took place that resulted in the child making an allegation. A comprehensive internal investigation by an independent manager ensured that the physical intervention used was in line with the home's policy.

Allegations are generally well managed. Allegations and complaints are dealt with by the manager and involve close liaison with external professionals. Some delays in closing incidents were evident due to responses from external professionals. The manager made considerable efforts to obtain the additional information necessary. The local authority designated officer raised no concerns in relation to the management of allegations or the way in which the manager communicates with the safeguarding team.

Record-keeping is generally comprehensive. However, details of a discussion with a professional were missing regarding an allegation. There was also a delay in notifying Ofsted of a safeguarding concern. This prevented Ofsted from having a current overview of the home's responses to the concern.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced in working with children. She has a good understanding of the home and past and present children and brings a competent and confident approach which staff value.

Leaders and managers have identified areas in which they feel that the staffing arrangements need to be strengthened and have plans to achieve this. Recruitment is ongoing to ensure a balance of ages and genders in the staffing team.

Staff are supported through regular, reflective supervision sessions with a strong focus on staff welfare and individual well-being. Detailed supervision notes are made. Additional supervision is in place for those staff on probation to enable greater oversight and support.

Training is generally comprehensive. All staff spoken with said that they have good levels of training. Induction for new staff provides core face-to-face and online training. Bespoke modules such as understanding autism, communication and secure base training are offered to the staff team. However, there is a missed opportunity to provide training on the impact of trauma on looked after children to give staff a greater understanding of trauma-informed practice.

Some language used to describe the home is not child-friendly, positive and caring.

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
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	1 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, they should ensure that staff receive appropriate training in trauma and the impact of trauma on children's emotional needs. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that records relating to children are written in child-friendly language and that language used to describe children is appropriate. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. In particular, ensure that details of telephone conversations with professionals are recorded clearly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1234621

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: Michelle Batchelor

Registered manager: Mica Lee

Inspector:

Emily Stevens, Social Care Inspector

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