

# 1243966

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people at any given time who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A primary aim is to ensure that the children and young people access education and therapy.

There are currently three children living in three separate cottages within the extensive school grounds owned and run by the same company. The management team has no intention to increase these numbers given the complexities of the children's needs.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced but is due to go on maternity leave. Recent sick leave has demonstrated that the current deputising arrangements in place are not sufficiently strong to effectively cover her maternity leave, so the provider is actively recruiting an interim manager.

**Inspection dates:** 27 to 30 April 2018

**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 **inadequate**

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:** 30 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
30/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/09/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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 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— 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>support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v))</p>	<p>11/06/2018</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— that staff help each child to—</p>	<p>11/06/2018</p>

<p>achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans;</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>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>details of the child's behaviour leading to 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 effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</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. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	31/05/2018
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p>	31/05/2018

<p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedures to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—  receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	31/05/2018
<p>The registered person must—  keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	31/05/2018
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.  The requirements are that—  the individual has the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(b))</p>	30/06/2018
<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.  In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—  the quality of care provided for children;  the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and  any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.  The registered person must—  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</p>	31/07/2018

<p>completed.</p> <p>The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(4)(a)(5))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a))</p>	31/05/2018
<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>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>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)(d))</p>	31/05/2018

## Recommendations

- Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 46, paragraph 9.31)
- Staff should be familiar with the home’s policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that

distinguishes fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person must appoint the independent person and is ultimately responsible for making sure that an appointment does not give rise to a conflict of interest that would, or would appear to, compromise the ability of that person to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement of the quality of that home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.6)

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection in January 2018, the same three children have been living at this home. The children remain relatively happy and settled. They still enjoy good relationships with the staff, and regular contact with family members which promotes their unique identities. High staffing ratios at all times ensure that children benefit from individualised care in line with their placement plans and personal preferences. Specialist therapy is in place to help to meet their complex emotional needs. One child said, 'I am happy here and I've got good staff who listen to my views and I think the rules are fair. My bedroom is okay. I get to go horse-riding, which makes me really happy.' However, overall children's experiences, progress and outcomes are variable.

Although, the children's school attendance has slightly decreased in the last term, it is still significantly better than in previous placements. An extract from a recent school report reads, 'This pupil continues to try hard in most lessons to achieve individual targets and has improved since the beginning of the year, producing some work in maths and English to a high standard. This child engages fully in therapeutic sessions, can be kind and considerate, and is a valued member of the school community.' In sharp contrast, one child is increasingly disengaging, and is encouraging others to misbehave, both inside and outside of school, which is jeopardising this placement.

Children positively contribute to their meetings about their day-to-day care and future plans. One child has specifically asked for help to improve their handwriting. School reports provide staff with clear information about the subjects in which children are working below their predicted grades. However, care staff do not record any support provided to children outside of the school day to help them reach their full educational potential. Nor could they provide explanations for a significant number of unauthorised absences.

All the children enjoy regular holidays, trips and a range of constructive activities that meet their individual interests and talents. One child said, 'I'm really good at singing and dancing.' Other current examples of children's interests include scooters and cars. One

child regularly attends two local youth clubs and has made friends outside of the care system. This strengthens their sense of belonging and improves social skills.

Children's health is being compromised in a number of ways. Examples include: an inconsistent standard of cleanliness in the home; children continuing to smoke tobacco; children refusing to wear prescribed glasses; and, despite it being an action in a statutory medical assessment, there is a lack of close monitoring to ensure that children have varied and nutritious diets and regular physical exercise.

None of the children is of an age to commence a formal independence programme but they do have to clean and tidy their bedrooms before they receive their weekly pocket money. They also enjoy helping with the food shopping and cooking.

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

All the children currently living at this home feel relatively safe and secure, having previously been near the point of requiring secure accommodation. They were also placed at the home so that they could access tailored education and therapy to meet their highly complex needs and behaviours. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's particular risks and vulnerabilities, and appropriate strategies are in place to try to keep them safe and promote their welfare. For all the children, this is their longest residential placement to date, which is acknowledged by the placing authorities.

Feedback from social workers includes:

- 'This child has previously had several placement endings, but the staff here continue to work through the difficult times with the child's best interests in mind and keep the child safe.'
- 'My child was difficult to place due to the complexity of needs but the staff have stuck by this child and managed all the behaviours presented and my child has therefore come on in leaps and bounds.'
- 'The communication is excellent.'

This home is in the middle of a prolonged and particularly challenging period which management, feel is likely to lead to one placement disruption due to the negative effect on the stability of the other children. This has led to an increase in restraints since the last inspection. One child said, 'I really don't like being restrained, but I understand why I am.'

Not all restraint records detail the duration of the physical intervention, as is legally required. Nor are they consistently scrutinised by managers to ensure that restraints are safe and proportionate practice at all times. Indeed, one incident led to a substantiated allegation of poor practice.

Good working relationships have been established with the local authority's designated officer and the police to safeguard and protect the children. The current management

team has also reversed the trend of frequently seeking police assistance to manage challenging behaviours. Consequently, the local police officer is happy to come to talk to the children following a serious incident, to avoid unnecessary criminalisation.

There has been an increase in missing from home incidents in recent months, but the frequency and duration remains significantly less than in the children's previous placements. The majority of missing incidents are for very short periods of time. Reflecting with staff after the incident, one child said, 'I just wanted some space.' There is generally a lack of detail in missing from home records.

Furthermore, fire safety records do not demonstrate that fire drills take place to ensure that new staff and children know exactly what to do in the event of a fire. A requirement has been made to address this shortfall. The variable quality of recordings suggests the need for more stringent management monitoring.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She also has the proven ability and confidence to appropriately and successfully challenge and advocate in children's best interests, especially if she feels other stakeholders are not fulfilling their specific roles. Recent examples include: securing specialist therapy for one child in addition to that provided internally; holding statutory reviews outside of school hours at the specific request of a child; and, ensuring that sessions with youth offending officers are relevant to the child's behaviours.

Furthermore, good daily support from the management team has successfully stopped the previous pattern of high staff turnover. Children are now cared for by a consistent team of staff who know children's individual needs and wishes well. However, there have been gaps in the staffing rotas. These are covered with overtime and agency workers known to the young people.

All staff have benefited from a good range of relevant training events since the last inspection. However, they have not all been receiving formal monthly supervision in line with the organisation's policy. This is mainly due to the fact that the registered manager has been on sick leave during this period and the deputising arrangements were not sufficient to cover all her roles. This had a negative effect on the day-to-day monitoring of the home and has contributed to the variable quality of record-keeping. There is also a lack of suitable cross-referencing of relevant documents, most notably sanction, restraint and missing from home records. Training is planned in May to address this. Moreover, the statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the current staff team and the furnishings in young people's bedrooms.

The two requirements and two recommendations made at the last inspection have not been addressed in full. In particular, the internal and external monitoring processes in place are still not sufficient. The systems for extracting key performance indicators and children's outcomes and progress remain ineffective. It is acknowledged that the home has recently invested in an electronic recording and auditing system, but, as yet, not all

staff are competent and/or confident in using it to its full potential.

Since the last inspection, a quality of care report was forwarded to Ofsted. However, the review process did not incorporate the views of parents and placing authorities, as is legally required. It is acknowledged that feedback is now being sought from a range of stakeholders to inform and enrich the next report.

As planned, the home has a new independent visitor, due to the provider being dissatisfied with the quality of the previous reports. The new reports demonstrate increased scrutiny and they are significantly more detailed and evaluative. However, they are still taking place in school hours, so children's views are not ascertained. Moreover, this individual provides staff training, so impartiality is compromised.

Since the last inspection, young people enjoyed a break away from the home, to enable the cottages to be redecorated. However, due to frequent and extensive criminal damage, a continued challenge is to maintain the three cottages at an acceptable standard at all times. Only one cottage has any semblance of a homely ambience.

Although there is an effective system to ensure that timely independent return home interviews are taking place, the outcomes of these are still not shared with the home to enable it to re-assess risks and explore new strategies to prevent a reoccurrence of children going missing from the home.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 1243966

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Responsible individual:** Antonio Munoz-Bailey

**Registered manager:** Michael Gayle  
Stephanie Hewitt

## Inspector

Lynn O'Driscoll, social care inspector

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