

SC432843

Registered provider: Talbot House School Newcastle Upon Tyne

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a charitable organisation and is registered to care for up to five children with behavioural difficulties and/or learning difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2020.

During this inspection, the inspector spoke with all the children currently living in the home.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

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: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
21/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/05/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children are happy and settled. They are cared for and supported well by a consistent staff team. This helps the children to form positive and trusting relationships with the staff.

Children receive the support that they need to be healthy and enjoy good health. Staff work closely with health professionals, which ensures that children access the services that they need. Children's medication is stored and administered safely by trained and competent staff.

Children have individual education plans, and they make progress from their starting points. Regular communication between the staff and education professionals means that the children's emotional needs are understood and managed sensitively. One child is currently excluded from school. The manager is challenging the relevant authorities to make appropriate alternative arrangements for this child. The staff encourage this child to take part in daily online learning prepared by the virtual school, and to go out on educational trips.

Staff support the children's learning at home well. The staff assist the children with their homework, and they encourage the children to develop new skills, such as cooking and tidying. This supports the children to develop their independence. One child is being supported well to prepare for their move into their next home.

Staff actively encourage the children to take part in joint activities. They are encouraged to meet up regularly to discuss and share their ideas. As a result, children feel understood and have a positive relationship with each other and the staff.

The staff understand the importance of children seeing their close family and friends. They support the children to keep in touch with those who are important to them. The staff are proactive and they address any difficulties that arise in the children's relationships. This helps the children to have stable support networks around them and to maintain their identity.

The children are encouraged and helped to personalise their bedrooms. The staff make sure that the home environment remains clean and in a good state of repair. This child-centred approach helps children to invest in their home and feel proud of where they live.

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

Children receive a high level of supervision and support. This is in line with the children's assessed needs. With careful planning, some children are being supported

to start taking age-appropriate risks, and become increasingly independent in their local community.

The manager and the staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Child-centred risk assessments support the staff to provide a good level of safety planning for the children. Staff use their strong relationships with the children to encourage them to contribute to their own care plans. This empowers the children and promotes resilience.

When children go missing from the home, the staff follow the agreed safeguarding protocols. The staff understand the factors that influence the children who go missing from the home, and they work with the children to overcome these. When children return to the home, they are welcomed warmly and sensitively by the staff. Staff are thoughtful, and they talk to the children and educate them about the risks they face when they go missing from the home. This has helped reduce this behaviour for some children.

When children display behaviour that places them and others at risk, the staff intervene appropriately. Children are physically held by the staff as a last resort. The children have the opportunity to discuss these incidents. They reflect on how they feel, and what other coping strategies they could use to reduce the potential of further incidents occurring.

Staff recruitment is managed well, and the principles of safe recruitment practice are followed. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working in the home.

Children's case files are incomplete. Supporting documents, such as the children's statutory looked after review minutes, their annual health assessments and their personal education plans, are not consistently and quickly obtained by the manager. The manager has missed an opportunity to demonstrate how she has escalated the lack of these documents to the child's placing local authority. As a result, the staff do not always have the most up-to-date information to coordinate the children's care. This may affect the children's progress.

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

The leadership and management arrangements of the home are not yet consistently good. However, the manager is passionate about providing good-quality care to the children. She works closely with external professionals, and their feedback is positive. These effective partnerships mean that the children feel secure, and they know that everyone has their best interests at heart.

The provider's monitoring and review systems are not used effectively; therefore, the shortfalls in the record-keeping have not been identified. Ineffective monitoring and review systems limit the manager's ability to assess whether the care provided to the children is in the children's best interests. This restricts the capacity of the home to improve.

Staff are not provided with regular supervision as set out in the home's statement of purpose. This oversight means that the staff are not provided with regular opportunities to reflect on their practice so that they can raise the standard of care that the children receive. As a result, issues that may affect the children continue.

The statement of purpose is out of date and does not reflect the changes in the staff. This means that the children and key stakeholders cannot be assured that the staff who care for the children have the skills, qualifications and experience to do so.

The manager and staff are committed to achieving positive outcomes for the children. The manager ensures that the monitoring and surveillance used in the home are only used to safeguard the children. However, the manager has failed to seek written consent from the children's parents and placing local authorities to use the bedroom door alarms. This means that the measures used to monitor the children's movement in the home have not been agreed and signed off by all the relevant people.

Partnership working with all relevant professionals and parents is good. The manager ensures that professionals and parents are updated regularly on any concerns and on the achievements of the children.

The manager ensures that there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children. Most of the staff hold a recognised childcare qualification. New staff receive a detailed induction, and they are enrolled on the provider's training programme. This enables staff to offer good-quality care to the children, as they are sufficiently trained.

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; and</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. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must escalate their concerns to the director of children’s services of the child’s placing authority when documents, such as the children’s looked after review meeting minutes and the child’s personal education plan review meeting minutes, are not received within a reasonable time.</p>	18 July 2022
<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>	18 July 2022

<p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must ensure that the staff are provided with regular supervision as set out in the home's statement of purpose.</p>	
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>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>	18 July 2022
<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; and</p> <p>the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must ensure that written consent for the use of monitoring and surveillance is obtained from the child's placing authority.</p>	18 July 2022
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and</p> <p>are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must ensure that the children's looked after children's review documents, personal education plan review documents and looked after health assessments are obtained and kept up to date.</p>	18 July 2022

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: SC432843

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Talbot House School, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Responsible individual: Deirdre Pearson

Registered manager: Sophie Robinson

Inspector

Cherie Chen, Social Care Inspector

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