

# SC438764

Registered provider: Potton Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. The home provides long-term placements for up to six children who may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse. The provider owns the school located on the site.

The registered manager has been registered since 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 October 2019

**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:** 3 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
03/01/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/07/2017	Full	Good
04/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/05/2016	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 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>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(vi))</p>	29/11/2019
<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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <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;</p>	29/11/2019

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))

## Recommendations

- Where children placed in the home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not in school for some other reason, ensure the child is consistently supported to sustain their confidence in education and engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

In particular, evaluate the practical arrangements within the home.

- Ensure that as set out in regulations 31–33 the recruitment of staff consistently safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, ensure that the information exchanged during reference verification is checked accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points. The staff build positive relationships with the children. The children receive a warm welcome from the staff on arrival, and this helps every child to feel supported.

The staff seek advice and guidance from other agencies. This ensures that the children access good help from social workers and health professionals. The children's families receive regular updates about their children's experiences and progress. One social worker said that she was 'impressed with how the home are managing' to care for a newly placed child.

Most children enjoy a broad range of leisure and social activities in the local community. This provides the children with opportunities to meet positive peers and build social connections. For example, one child has a weekend job, is a member of army cadets and sits on a youth advisory group.

Children are encouraged to cook, and there is a varied menu. The staff and the children regularly enjoy meals together. This helps to create a family ambience and encourages the children to talk about their day and share their worries.

The staff try to support and model healthy lifestyles. They facilitate and take part in physical activities with the children, such as going to the gym, running and tennis. However, some children said that the recent staff shortages have reduced the choice of activities. This has left some children feeling frustrated.

Some children attend education and their attendance and engagement in lessons increase. This helps the children to realise their potential. When children are excluded from education, the staff do not consistently reduce distractions from the busy home environment. This does not ensure that children receive consistent messages about the value of education.

The home is well presented and comfortable. The children like their bedrooms. The bright, clean environment contributes to a positive living environment.

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

The staff take their responsibility for safeguarding seriously. They demonstrate an awareness of the general risks to the children and the importance of their role in keeping them safe. The staff have built relationships with the children based on trust. These relationships contribute to keeping the children safe.

The manager and local police work collaboratively to ensure that there are coordinated responses to children who go missing from the home. The frequency of this has reduced. Local police visit the home and take time to get to know individual children. This helps to reduce risks to children in the community.

The children say that the staff listen to them and value their opinions. The staff and the children meet regularly to discuss and resolve difficulties, including bullying and discrimination. Regular children's meetings give the children a voice to share what is important to them.

The staff use incentives, praise and rewards to encourage positive behaviour. Physical restraint is used appropriately and as a last resort. The experienced staff have shown high levels of resilience and the ability to remain child-focused when faced with challenging situations.

Some staff have been assaulted, and some children say that they have felt bullied by other children. The manager is quick to proactively address aggressive and discriminatory behaviour. This helps the children to understand the effect of their behaviours on others.

The manager and the staff are aware of individual risk-taking behaviour. However, the staff fail to manage emerging risks in a dynamic way. The risk assessments do not

include concerns about the children smoking or the staff's observations of children's smoking paraphernalia. This lessens the staff's ability to reduce future risk.

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

The manager is suitably qualified and has a good understanding of the children's needs. She leads by example and is directly involved in the children's care.

The manager frequently intervenes to support less confident staff. The time spent dealing with incidents has detracted from the strategic aspects of her role. When the manager is present, incidents are managed appropriately. However, some of the staff fail to provide consistency of care.

There are systems in place to monitor the service, but these do not include learning from serious incidents. This means valuable lessons may be missed.

The home has been through a period of change. There are enough staff for the low occupancy levels. However, the high staff turnover has resulted in staff shortages. This has left less experienced staff dealing with challenging situations unsuccessfully. As a result, two children have experienced unplanned endings.

The recruitment processes are not systematic. One new staff member's previous employment record contained inconsistencies. The information provided was not accurately verified. This fails to provide good management oversight of recruitment.

The staff receive a period of induction, regular supervision and ongoing training. Supervisors guide the staff with regular support. Whistle-blowing procedures are communicated clearly, and a culture of openness is encouraged. This safeguards children.

## **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:** SC438764

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

**Registered provider:** Potton Homes Limited

**Registered provider address:** 1 Cresswell Park, Blackheath, London SE3 9RD

**Responsible individual:** Susan Potton

**Registered manager:** Michelle Kerrison

## Inspectors

Angela Weston, social care inspector

Rosie Davie, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019