

# SC035625

Registered provider: Rowden House School Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is part of a residential special school. It can care for up to 30 children with learning disabilities across seven houses in the grounds of the school. At the time of this inspection, 18 children were living in the children's home.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2020 and holds the appropriate qualifications.

### Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

**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 **requires improvement to be good**

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:** 29 June 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
29/06/2021	Full	Good
01/10/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/06/2018	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff have developed individualised plans for children. They work with the on-site school to develop progress targets for each child. However, staff are not always following plans or clearly showing how they are helping children to meet their targets. For example, records did not show how staff supported a child with their sensory diet. Consequently, some children may struggle due to sensory challenges and others may not be progressing as well as they could be.

Records do not always show when children are being offered drinks. For some children, records show that they have had limited drinks or fluid intake. This could mean that those less able to independently access drinks may not always be having sufficient fluids each day.

Staff support children with all aspects of their daily living and, for most children, staff make sure their dignity and privacy are maintained. However, on one occasion, inspectors observed that a child's dignity was not maintained when they were getting dressed, with staff leaving their bedroom door open. As a result, others, including the inspector, were able to see into the child's room.

Staff know children well and have developed positive relationships with them. Staff show genuine warmth towards children. As a result, children appear happy living in the home and are making progress.

Most children living at the home attend the on-site school. Staff help those children who previously had poor attendance to attend regularly. Some children also engage in work experience away from the school, at a farm. Consequently, children are progressing well and enjoy going to education.

Staff help children to become more independent. One child keeps chickens and helps care for them. Other children can do many tasks including cooking, cleaning, washing and dressing with support from staff. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stages of their life.

Staff are proactive in seeking children's views. Staff help children by using social stories, pictures and objects of reference. Even the least able are encouraged to choose. Consequently, children feel valued and listened to.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities in the home and in the wider community. Staff take children swimming, on holidays, on trips to the beach and to theme parks. Staff have also made sure children do not miss out on celebrations. Children enjoyed the Queen's Jubilee by having a party, they had an end of year prom and they attended the local town's Jubilee with scarecrows event. This means children have the same opportunities as any other child would.

Staff make sure children are supported to see their families. Families spoken to were positive about the care and progress of their children. Comments from parents included, 'Thank God for [name of children's home]. He's a very happy boy, it's very different from the last school,' and, 'It's amazing to see how happy he is,' and, regarding another child, parents said, 'She looks happy and is able to sign some language now.'

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

High numbers of staff caring for the children help to keep children safe. Staff have developed good routines for children and because of these routines and structures children are more settled. However, not all staff were aware or knowledgeable of children's behaviour management plans. This lack of knowledge could result in inconsistent approaches when caring for children.

Staff have developed risk assessments for children which identify their risks and strategies to manage those risks. However, not all risk assessments are reviewed following incidents and some lack the detail staff would need to adequately manage those risks. This could mean staff are not aware of all risks or how to safely manage those risks to prevent harm to children.

Staff do not always make sure all areas of the home are safe and clean. Inspectors found a broken light fitting with exposed wires, a loose panel in a bathroom, excessive dust on shelves and a cooker hood and one oven that were very dirty. When repairs are made, they can create further risks. For example, in one bathroom, broken tiles had been repaired after a child banged their head. The repair meant there was now a wooden strip. This has created a further risk if the child was to bang their head again.

On occasions, staff do need to use physical intervention to keep children safe. However, staff do not always accurately record the reasons and the lead-up when they have had to use physical intervention. As a result, this limits the ability of managers to evaluate effectively the suitability and effectiveness of the physical intervention used.

Inspectors noted that logbooks and handover books were left out and in one home a laptop was left open and logged on to the home's electronic recording system. This practice does not promote children's confidentiality.

Managers take concerns seriously and have responded appropriately to allegations and complaints. As a result, children feel able to raise concerns, knowing they will be listened to and acted on.

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

The registered manager has been reliant on the individual homes' managers to oversee and report concerns and findings. However, on some occasions, that oversight has not always been robust. As a result, there are shortfalls in the cleanliness of the home, the maintenance of the home and in children's records and risk assessments.

When physical interventions have taken place, debriefs are, on occasions, undertaken by staff who do not always have the skills and knowledge to fulfil that responsibility. For example, these staff do not read the physical intervention reports to ensure that they are accurate or to question or clarify the action taken. On one occasion, this resulted in a delay in reporting a notifiable incident to the regulator. The physical interventions used are not subject to the level of scrutiny needed to ensure that they are appropriate.

There are areas of weakness in the management of the home. The responsibilities delegated by the registered manager to the individual homes' managers are not consistently being undertaken as would be expected to ensure the safety and well-being of children. However, the registered manager has identified the shortfalls and is beginning to address them by reorganising the house management teams, and their training and instruction. The manager has also identified learning for herself in how she records when she has overseen records and challenged staff's practice.

The home relies on an electronic system for recording information about children and the home. However, access to that system can be a challenge for others who need to see those records. This can mean the regulator is unable to fully scrutinise everything that happens at the home.

Staffing at the home has been a challenge, with several staff leaving since the last inspection. Recruitment is ongoing and permanent staff are supported by agency staff. Permanent and agency staff have been participating in training provided by the home. Managers have been mindful of balancing consistency of care with experience of staff and have moved staff around in the homes to ensure that children are cared for by experienced staff, as far as possible. As a result, children are given consistency of care by those they know.

Managers have challenged placing authorities in the best interests of children. For one child, managers felt the proposed move to an adult care setting was inappropriate for the child's needs. After providing evidence of why they felt this was not a suitable placement, the placing authority made changes and a more suitable placement was found. As a result, the child will move to a placement which better meets their needs.

## 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, the registered persons should ensure that staff develop plans that show how staff will help children meet targets. In addition, that staff follow plans such as sensory diets and that staff record all progress made by children and review the children's plans.</p>	31 August 2022
<p>The health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being needs of children are met. (Regulation 10 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the registered persons should ensure that staff make sure that children are receiving sufficient fluids throughout the day.</p>	30 July 2022
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	31 August 2022

<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>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered persons should ensure that risk assessments are updated following incidents. In addition, when areas of the home are damaged, repairs do not create further risks and that any risks are made safe and promptly repaired. Staff should make sure all areas of the home are kept clean.</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.</p>	
<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>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;</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)(f)(h))</p>	<p>31 August 2022</p>

<p>In particular, the registered persons, including the registered manager, should ensure that they have oversight of and monitor all aspects of children’s care. This includes children’s records, to ensure that:</p> <p>their plans are regularly reviewed and updated;</p> <p>that any restrictions in place, such as the locking of children’s wardrobes, are regularly reviewed to see if they are still necessary;</p> <p>that repairs are promptly reported and repaired;</p> <p>that the cleanliness of the home is maintained.</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 any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</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 signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(viii)(b)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered persons should ensure that staff accurately record the reasons and the lead-up to incidents when they have had to use physical intervention. In addition, the registered persons should ensure that debriefs are undertaken by staff who have the necessary skills and knowledge.</p>	<p>31 August 2022</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children’s case records are stored securely while they are in the home. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3)



- The registered person should ensure that electronic records can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view them and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.2)
- The registered person should ensure that when children in residential care are living in a group environment, it is important staff respect children's privacy and support them to maintain their dignity from others living and working at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.17)
- 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. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that they have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

## **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:** SC035625

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Rowden House School Limited

**Registered provider address:** 1 St George's, Vernon Gate, Derby, Derbyshire DE1 1UQ

**Responsible individual:** Mark Flynn

**Registered manager:** Iwona Makal

## Inspectors

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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