

1236532

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to six children with learning disabilities, autism spectrum conditions, complex needs and social and emotional difficulties. Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in July 2023.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 April 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: 19 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/06/2023	Full	Good
29/06/2022	Full	Good
31/01/2022	Full	Outstanding
10/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children flourish due to the warm and nurturing relationships they have with the staff. Social workers and family members comment positively about the progress the children make. One said their child is 'making amazing progress', and it is 'reassuring how well he is looked after'.

Children's views are central to the running of the home. The speech and language therapist trains staff to use communication methods and tools, to ensure that the children can make themselves heard and understood. The children's ability to communicate has improved dramatically since the last inspection. A social worker said that their child 'now has a voice'.

All children have established education placements at the local special school. Many walk to school and they enjoy activities in the local community. Strong partnership working with the school staff has led to greater consistency in approaches to target setting and children's communication. A school leader commented positively on the increased communication between school staff and home staff.

Children enjoy a wide a range of emotionally and physically stimulating activities. Programmes of sensory play and trying new experiences are well thought through and consider each child's needs. Children access the community, learning skills for life, such as crossing the road or paying for items in local shops. Children gain recognised qualifications to show the progress they are making. They also enjoy trips further away to places of interest to them. Staff are not risk averse for children and provide them with new and rewarding experiences.

Children's physical and emotional health and well-being needs are well met. Children are helped to understand their health needs and learn how to make healthy choices through their diet and exercise. A parent commented on how well staff are preparing their child for an upcoming medical procedure, helping him become familiar with the equipment that will be used.

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

Children are comfortable and confident in their home. They approach staff for help and support when they are worried or upset. Staff know the children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. Staff recognise the small changes in children's presentation and respond quickly to these.

Joint working with partner agencies, including the local authority designated officer when needed, ensures that the manager and staff are open about safeguarding and child protection concerns. The manager notifies partner agencies when concerns arise.

However, on one occasion, the manager did not notify Ofsted of an allegation against a member of staff. All other processes were followed.

Staff know the processes to follow should they be worried for a child's safety or well-being, including how to escalate concerns outside the home if needed. Staff understand that the children are at greater risk due their learning disabilities, and are open and transparent in their practice.

Staff understand that all behaviour is a form of communication and seek to understand what children are communicating when they are unhappy or distressed. Children are helped to understand their behaviours and learn to manage stressful situations in ways that cause them less anxiety.

Incidents are used as a learning opportunity for children, and natural consequences are used to support this learning. Individual debriefs are tailored to the children's communication and processing needs, which helps them to express how they were feeling. Children's plans do not always have the detail required for staff to follow. For example, one support plan did not detail how a child should be helped to move from one activity to another or how the child shows they are asking for help. However, staff know the children well and help and support the children appropriately.

Children are protected from avoidable risk through regular checks of the home and environment. Children know the sound of the fire alarm and know what to do when it sounds. Safer recruitment practices are followed, reducing the risk of children being cared for by unsuitable people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is well run by the manager and two experienced deputies. Staff are enthusiastic about their roles and speak highly of the management team and the support they get. Staff work positively together, and children have predictable and consistent care. Staff are part of the decision-making process, and managers genuinely care about their views and ideas.

Staff benefit from regular support through supervision and team meetings. The training programme supports the needs of the children, and there has been a particular focus on communication. All staff attend regular communication workshops and training in specific communication methods has been started recently. Staff talk excitedly about upcoming training of the 'lived experience' of autism. This will benefit staff to further understand in greater detail the needs of the children they care for. Many members of staff have a suitable residential childcare qualification and staff who do not are working towards gaining this.

The management team is continually developing processes and monitoring systems in the home, to ensure that all the children are getting the care and support they need. Regular evaluation of practice ensures that staff are providing care as described in the home's statement of purpose. The recent change of the independent person has been

welcomed by the registered manager, who appreciates the increased challenge and critical evaluation of the home. In response, the management team ensures that any shortfalls are remedied and is seeking guidance on any improvements they can make to ensure children have the best outcomes possible.

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— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) Specifically, report all allegations of abuse against staff working in the home to HMCI.	14 June 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there is sufficiently detailed information in all plans regarding children's behaviours of distress. Plans should also include detail of how staff should respond at these times. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)

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: 1236532

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Calcot Services for Children Limited

Registered provider address: Advantage, 87 Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7SN

Responsible individual: Robin Ward

Registered manager: Mark Veasey

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Shirin White, Social Care Inspector

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