

1264841

Registered provider: Autism Sussex Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable organisation on behalf of the local authority and provides short-break services for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are currently 32 children accessing the service on a rotational basis. There were 2 children staying at the home for short breaks at the time of the inspection. The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in December 2017.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 22 October 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/10/2025	Full	Outstanding
28/01/2025	Full	Good
13/12/2023	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children benefit from highly motivated, nurturing and ambitious staff. The committed, stable workforce provides exceptional and consistent care, so children have been able to form positive relationships and feel safe when accessing their short breaks. Children have made significant progress in their life skills and community participation. Managers and staff are aspirational for all children and ensure consistent and high-quality care.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have child-focused plans that illustrate their needs and aspirations, which are translated into achievable goals. Creative and innovative staff have developed a Talking Mat so children can indicate their needs in the moment. Children also have individualised communication plans that illustrate their preferred methods of communication. This helps to reduce children's frustrations that can lead to distress and behaviours that challenge.

Children with complex health and social care needs have made significant progress from their individual starting points through developing life skills such as cooking, making a hot drink and baking. Children's ambitions are prioritised and thoughtfully considered. For example, one child expressed an interest in working in social media, so they were supported to produce a video for Autism Acceptance Month. This was showcased in the organisation and on social media. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated, no matter how small.

Children have been helped to make sustainable progress by being supported and encouraged to take part in social and recreational activities, such as trips to the seaside, nature walks, using sensory equipment and engaging in arts and crafts.

Children have their own individualised daily schedules, so staff are fully aware of their routines and support needs. This helps children to settle when they arrive for their short break so they can fully participate and enjoy their activities.

Managers actively promote inclusivity. Children's diversity and cultural and religious needs are sensitively considered, such as their skin and hair care and dietary needs. Children are supported to celebrate religious festivals, such as Eid and Diwali, and to participate in Black History Month.

Children's meetings use a range of communication tools so children can actively participate and contribute to service developments.

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

Children receive highly effective help and protection from compassionate, experienced and skilled staff who understand their needs. Children have individual risk assessments that are reviewed and amended to reflect children's changing needs.

Children's support plans help staff to understand what children find helpful when they are feeling distressed. This ensures children receive effective and timely tailored support to reduce behaviours that might be harmful to themselves or others.

Staff recognise children's triggers and know how to engage children to reduce behaviours through effective and appropriate support and intervention strategies. Proactive safeguarding practice and highly effective planning have successfully managed and minimised risks in the home and community. As a result, there have been no safeguarding notifications, incidents of physical intervention, consequences or children going missing from home since the last inspection.

Staff understand child protection and whistleblowing and whom they need to speak with should they have concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The efficient, experienced and highly effective registered manager is ambitious for children and consistently considers new ways of working to develop the service. This includes recently introducing 'My Aspire', which is a document to capture children's goals and track their progress, so achievements are clearly evidenced and celebrated.

The registered manager has developed a positive and supportive working culture that has created the conditions for success, so staff and children are able to thrive. The registered manager has high expectations of staff and ensures that practice in the home is consistent with the home's ethos as set out in the statement of purpose. Managers provide consistent and highly effective services for children. The quality of care has led to sustained improvements in the lives of children receiving short breaks in the home.

The managers and staff know the children extremely well. Children's records are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, so they reflect children's current needs. Parents are actively encouraged and supported to review their child's records to ensure a consistent approach to the care being provided at home and during the short break. Managers promote effective partnership and collaborative relationships with parents and carers, so they feel assured that their child is being well cared for during their stay.

Staff create detailed reports that fully illustrate children's progress. Staff attend multi-agency meetings to share information about their observations of children during their short break. Staff contributions ensure that assessments and plans are up to date and reflect children's current needs.

Children benefit from managers advocating on their behalf to ensure their needs are met. Feedback from social workers provides evidence that children have positive experiences and receive high-quality care during their short breaks. A social worker told the inspector, 'We have developed a strong collaborative partnership built on open communication and a shared commitment to the wellbeing of the children in their care.' Staff actively engage in community-based activities to raise the profile of the short-breaks provision. This helps parents to understand what services are available locally for their child.

Leaders have created a comprehensive workforce development plan that captures the organisation's ambitions going forward. Staff have access to a learning and development programme, including research-based topics that are shared in team meetings to inform practice. This provides staff with an opportunity to reflect on current practice themes related to disabled children. Managers have been highly effective in the retention of staff.

No requirements were made following the inspection

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: 1264841

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Autism Sussex Ltd

Registered provider address: Autism Sussex Ltd, Sussex House, 19 High Street, Battle TN33 0AE

Responsible individual: Samantha Fievez

Registered manager: Mandy Kennedy

Inspector

Nicki Shaw, His Majesty's Inspector

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