

2523027

Registered provider: Kennet Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 11 July 2022.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 January 2025

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: 5 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2023	Full	Good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
28/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
31/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress because of the strong relationships staff develop with them. Children say that they can talk to staff when they experience challenges in their lives, and they enjoy spending quality time together. Staff help children to learn strategies to manage their feelings and communicate better with others. One child said, 'The staff have been so supportive, I can express myself in a safe place.'

Children are provided with a range of ways to communicate their wishes, and they regularly do so. When children express their views and feelings, staff take them seriously.

Children are helped to stay in touch with people who are important to them. The home has helped children to manage relationships with family members more independently. Staff advocate strongly for children to overcome barriers to seeing their families.

Diversity is celebrated. As a result, children understand the world better. They learn about equality and have new experiences through a range of creative events, such as culture days, awareness events and fun activities in the community. One child has been supported to attend a Pride event in London.

Staff promote children's engagement with education. They work closely with schools to sustain children's attendance and to help children achieve. One child is being helped to prepare for their GCSEs. When children are not attending school, staff make plans quickly to provide them with alternative provisions and engage with the professional network so that children can return to more formal education.

Children have fun. They are encouraged to try new activities, such as go-karting and trampolining, and they have been on holiday together.

Children who have moved into or out of the home have been supported in a sensitive, child-centred manner with the best possible planning and preparation. Staff are considerate of the children who live in the home and involve them in welcoming new children to the home or saying goodbye. Staff maintain appropriate contact with children who have left the home and value the role they have had in their lives.

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

Staff help children to understand risk and how to keep themselves safe, rather than avoid risk. They use technology to help children access the internet safely and to allow them to access the community more independently. As children's risks change, their plans are updated. Staff seek specialist advice from clinical professionals to help them better understand children's needs.

Staff are clear about what to do should they have concerns about the conduct of another professional. They understand their responsibilities for safeguarding children in their care. Recruitment practice is robust and minimises risks to children.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted through the use of reward systems, clear expectations and boundaries. When staff apply consequences, these are restorative in nature and encourage children to learn from their experiences. As a result, incidents of behaviours that challenge have reduced.

When children experience difficult feelings that lead them to harm themselves, staff respond with care to help children feel safe and get them the support they need. They work effectively with other specialist agencies, such as mental health services, to ensure that children receive care that is planned effectively and their needs are better understood.

Physical intervention is used rarely. When it is required, it is proportionate to the circumstances. Children live in an environment where restraint is not normalised. As a result, children have more positive experiences, even when they experience challenges. However, managers have not always spoken to staff about each use of restraint and have missed potential opportunities to identify learning. This has had minimal impact on children because restraint is so rarely used in the home.

When children go missing, staff look for them and contact them to encourage them to return. When children return, staff seek to understand the child's motivations so that they can try to prevent reoccurrence. However, plans which inform staff of what to do when children are missing are not always clear. On one occasion, staff contacted a manager to seek advice about what action to take and the advice given appeared ambiguous. This delayed coordination with other agencies, such as the police.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is highly ambitious for children and passionate about helping them to achieve positive outcomes. Children speak warmly about the manager's impact on their lives. One child said, 'She (the manager) is amazing, she's like my mother. She's helped me so much.'

Staff feel supported in their roles because they receive regular supervision and appraisals. Staff speak positively about their experience of working with the manager. One staff member said, 'She is best manager I have had. She is always there when we need her.'

New staff say they are well supported through a high-quality induction and are well prepared for their roles. Since the last inspection, managers have invested in significant training and support for staff. Staff have the skills and confidence to meet children's needs when they move into the home. Staff turnover is remarkably low. As a result, children receive consistent care from familiar, skilled staff who know them well and understand them.

Managers work effectively with other professionals to ensure that children's needs are met. Managers challenge professionals if they identify that they are not fulfilling their statutory obligations to children. This means that children get the help they need.

Feedback from parents and professionals about the home is complimentary of the support that children receive. One parent said, 'I love [name of child] being here, I'm really happy with how they are being supported.' A social worker for one child said, 'They (the staff) do go above and beyond for the children.'

Management oversight and monitoring systems are not yet effective at identifying shortfalls in children's records. Some records relating to children's behaviour are unclear, while others omit important information from safeguarding records. As a result, managers have potentially missed opportunities to ensure that children receive appropriate support. Similarly, some language used in children's records is not thoughtful or helpful to children.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) The registered person must ensure that monitoring and review systems are effective in recognising and addressing when children's records are incomplete, unclear or contain language that is unhelpful to children.	21 February 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. Following the use of any restraint, managers should speak to the user about the measure. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should make clear to staff the procedures to be followed when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)

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: 2523027

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kennet Care Limited

Registered provider address: Goringe Accountants Waterside, 1650 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire RG7 4SA

Responsible individual: Dennis Austin-Visser

Registered manager: Sarah Canning

Inspector

Glen Strowbridge, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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