

2529785

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home is registered to care for up to seven children who have physical disabilities and/or a learning disability and/or sensory impairment.

Thirteen children have regular stays in this home.

During the inspection, one child was living in the home on a full-time basis and three children were staying in the home overnight. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2024.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 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: 1 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2021	Full	Good
16/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Thirteen children have regular stays in this home. One child lives in the home on a full-time basis. Four children were seen and spoken with during the inspection. Children enjoy their short breaks and make timely progress because their needs are prioritised by the adults who care for them. Children have been supported to develop their communication skills and confidence. They appear happy and settled during their stays, and they look forward to their short breaks. Two children said that they really like staying in this home and that they have fun with the adults. They really like their bedrooms. They said that they get on well with the staff and can really talk to them if they are worried about something. One child said that they would like to have a pet.

Children have access to a wide range of opportunities during their stays. This widens their experiences as that they can do activities that they would not usually do at home. Children explore the local area and have fun doing crafts. They enjoy a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home. This includes sensory play, going swimming, visiting places of interest and having fun outings to the zoo or the seaside. One child has been going to martial arts classes during their stays, and another has joined St John Ambulance. One professional said that the child they support has made substantial progress with their confidence and with being able to communicate with others.

Many parents gave positive feedback about their children's experiences, saying that the staff are fantastic, amazing and brilliant. One parent said that their child loves going to stay and really enjoys their time there; the children have a lot of fun. They said their child has a dedicated link worker who knows their child very well and that the staff always plan different activities to do with the children. One parent said that last summer there was a focus on transport, and their child's activities involved travelling on different types of transport, such as buses and trains, to give them a wide range of experiences.

Children make timely progress in this short-break home, and they respond well to the routines and boundaries that are in place for them. They are encouraged to eat healthy meals during their stays, and to be active in their local community. Children enjoy cooking and being involved in planning their meals. They attend school regularly and are encouraged to make progress with their levels of independence. One child has been learning how to plan their meals and how to cook for themselves. They go shopping with staff to purchase food and are learning how to do their own laundry. They have been learning how to use their own mobile phone safely, with support from the adults.

Children benefit from having consistent levels of care from a skilled care team. There is a good mixture of newer and more experienced members of staff in this home. This means that children are learning to be cared for by a range of different adults. The staff are skilled and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of children's emotional, health and care needs. The staff can interpret children's presentation and behaviour, so

they know how children are feeling. They can recognise the signs that children are unhappy or feeling unwell. This ensures that children receive the absolute best levels of care from adults who know them well. When one child was unhappy about getting on the minibus to school, adults supported them to walk the short distance to school.

The home is welcoming, clean and comfortable. There are comfortable sofas to sit on and a spacious dining area so that children can enjoy meals with adults. The garden is well maintained and has play equipment for children to use. This area is being further developed so that a new trampoline can be fitted. There are some improvements that need to be made to the home to make it feel more homely. There have been leaks in some of the rooms and some of the doors need to be replaced. There is a plan of work to improve the conditions in the home. One child said that they would like to have a stronger internet connection so that they can play more of the games that they like.

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

Safeguarding has been managed well in this home. Staff understand the vulnerability of the children that they care for and place children's needs at the centre of their practice. They take strong and decisive action to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Staff work hard to identify any potential safeguarding concerns and take prompt action when needed. There have only been two safeguarding issues identified since the last inspection, and neither of these related to practice in this home.

Communication with families, social workers and other professionals is timely and effective in helping to keep children safe and promoting their welfare. A robust plan was in place when one child moved on to another provision. This included contact to share information between this home and the new care provider. The new care team visited the home regularly to get to know the child. The child was provided with positive support and social stories to help them process what was happening. On the day they moved, the staff from this home travelled with the child to their new home to provide them with support and reassurance so that they were able to settle. This high level of support shows that there are staff around each child who are all working together as a team. This helps to keep children safe.

There is good practice around prescription medication in this home. When worries about medication are identified, they are checked and followed up by staff. Regular audits take place, and this supports the manager and staff to ensure that there is good practice in this home. A new online recording system is being introduced to improve practice in this area. Physical restraints have been used on one occasion to prevent a child from harming another child or members of staff. This was done to keep everyone safe. When children are experiencing difficulties with managing their own emotions, the adults offer strong levels of support to them. This helps children to calm more quickly and helps to prevent their behaviour from escalating. When concerns were raised about staff's practice, these were investigated appropriately and action was taken.

On one occasion, the manager and staff became aware of concerns about another organisation. An appropriate referral was made to ensure that external agencies were aware of this situation. The manager was not aware of what action has been taken. One child is having a specialist assessment completed. Managers and staff were not aware of the work that is being completed with this child, so that they are better able to support them in the future.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is skilled and knowledgeable. She has good knowledge of the children and has developed strong relationships with them. The manager regularly has meals with the children and engages in their day-to-day care. The manager is ambitious for children, the home and the staff who work here. Children's complex needs are understood and well supported. There is a constant ambition from the manager to support children to have new experiences and to make progress from their starting points.

When children move into this home, a positive plan is developed for them, including a home visit from the manager and staff. Staff visit the child in school and there is a gradual increase in the child's time spent in the home. These plans are child-focused and move forward at the pace of the child involved. The manager involves the children in the decisions that are being made about them. Through listening to the children, they adapt the support that is being provided to them.

There is a good mixture of newer and more experienced members of staff in this home. They have a good understanding of the children's needs and how to care for them. Staff said that they enjoy working in this home. They have regular supervision and access to good levels of training. Staff spoke positively about training that has been identified to support them in caring for the children. Regular team meetings are held, and these are well attended. This helps to improve practice in this home.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the arrangements in the home. They understand what is working well and any areas that need further development. The manager has supported staff to record information about children in an appropriate way, and this is evident in children's records. There are good levels of management oversight in children's records to ensure that information is recorded clearly.

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 ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (2) (c)) In particular, the home environment needs to be maintained so that good standards are present throughout the home.	6 June 2025

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: 2529785

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Registered provider address: Devon County Council, Chief Executive's Directorate, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD

Responsible individual: Glenn Lobb

Registered manager: Sarah White

Inspector

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector

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