

2536967

Registered provider: Kent County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home cares for three children with learning difficulties. The home provides specialist support and intervention for children with complex needs for up to 16 weeks.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The home was registered in December 2019. The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 August 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: 10 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2024	Full	Good
10/08/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by a dedicated and skilled staff team who have good knowledge of their individual needs. As a result of positive relationships with staff, children have settled and feel secure and well cared for.

Children are subject to some restrictions in their freedom due to concerns about their safety. Clear expectations are set with children when they move in, helping them to understand what is expected of them and how they will be supported to be safer. Primarily, this focuses on promoting positive behaviour and supporting children to make safer choices in the community. Children have responded well to this and recognise how the support from staff is helping them make progress.

Children participate in a wide range of activities, all of which are based on individual requests. Staff are creative in the way they support and encourage children to try new things, such as local trips to the park, football games and trips out shopping. For some children, this is significant progress.

Staff ensure they use children's preferred methods of communication and children are continually taught to use different ways to think and communicate how they feel. Children are consulted and involved in identifying goals and targets to prepare them for their future, in line with their individual needs and plans.

Children are supported to learn how to manage key tasks to become more independent, such as cooking and learning to budget. This has helped children to move on from the home successfully, including one child who was able to return to live with their family.

Decisions on children moving into the home are made by a team of professionals including the manager, responsible individual, social worker and representatives from the local authority health team. There is good information-sharing to support children's moves to be successful. However, the information and focus are on the child moving in and do not sufficiently explore how new admissions may affect children already living in the home.

The recording systems in place to share information are mindful of children's right to privacy and confidentiality. However, on occasion, staff have used mobile phones to share specific information about children and request information from each other. Leaders are unable to determine who has seen these messages and this presents some risk that children's personal information may be compromised. Leaders recognised this during the inspection and have begun to identify alternative methods of communication.

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

Staff carefully balance the need to keep children safe with allowing them to take acceptable risks in going into the community and developing skills for independence. Children who need close supervision to keep them safe are supported in a thoughtful way to help them have a positive experience and gain trust.

Children have high levels of supervision and are supported to make safer choices. Staff are alert to the risks that children may face if unsupported in the community and have clear safety plans in place. There has been only one instance when a child went missing from the home for a brief period. Staff responded promptly and ensured their safe return. Staff carefully reviewed the circumstances that led to the child being able to leave without permission and improved the safety plan to prevent this happening again.

Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for children and children respond well to this. Staff work closely with families to ensure a consistent approach to supporting children to understand positive behaviours and make progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, leaders have made improvements to care practice. There has been a focus on helping staff to develop their understanding of individual children's needs and how best to respond to these. This has helped staff to prioritise their work and build trusting relationships with children. As a result, staff are more confident in what they are doing, and children are making good progress in their positive behaviours, social skills and making safer choices.

Leaders have an open-door policy, ensuring that staff know that there is always someone they can talk to whenever there are challenges. Staff talk positively about this and how helpful it has been. To further support staff, they all receive practice-based supervision and have a comprehensive training plan to support their professional development.

There is a good understanding of children's views and wishes. Leaders ensure that staff are mindful of children's individual communication needs and encourage children to share their feelings. There is a good response when children raise anything they would like to change; this is often about trips out or things they would like changed in the home.

Children clearly make good progress in this home, however, there are no systems in place to capture and measure their progress. This reduces the effectiveness of management oversight, to recognise where children have succeeded and to identify any further areas where they may be supported to reach their full potential.

Independent monitoring takes place through monthly visits. However, these visits do not provide adequate scrutiny or information to help leaders identify any potential areas for improvement or service development.

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: 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))	30 September 2025
The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (5))	30 September 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept— securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(c))	30 September 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should only accept placements for children when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2536967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kent County Council

Registered provider address: Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Road, Maidstone ME14 1XQ

Responsible individual: Tanya Hartness

Registered manager: Alice Scott

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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