

2571557

Registered provider: Medway Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to five children aged from five to 18 years with a learning and physical disability.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 18 December 2024.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2025	Full	Good
09/05/2023	Full	Good
20/06/2022	Full	Good
28/03/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who come to stay for short breaks receive care from a staff team with a good knowledge of their individual needs. The staff ensure that their stay is a mix of fun, positive new experiences, educational opportunities and a chance to increase their independence skills.

Children are making progress. Individual targets are set for six months and are kept under review to make sure they are relevant. As there is sometimes a significant gap between stays, staff assure themselves that children have met targets before moving on to something new.

Staff work closely with parents and professionals to provide consistent care. When inconsistencies have been identified through reviews, staff have been quick to respond. They have made sure that children know what is expected of them and the response to them is the same whether they are at school, home or coming for a short-break stay.

Parents and professionals talk positively about the care the children receive, with one parent describing it as life changing for both her child and the family. Communication is good and any concerns that need to be shared are done so immediately.

Children's individual communication needs are well understood. Staff use creative systems to help children to share their views with the help of pictures and symbols. Staff use these systems to help the children to choose things such as activities and food choices.

Staff are skilled at meeting the children's complex health needs. Staff are trained to ensure that appropriate care is delivered in line with individual health plans. Medication is, in the main, delivered effectively. When errors have occurred, these are picked up quickly by internal monitoring. Staff are then retrained and reassessed to assure their suitability.

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

Leaders have ensured that staff understand their responsibilities when it comes to keeping children safe. They have created a culture where safeguarding and risks are consistently discussed through handovers, team meetings and discussions with parents and professionals.

Staff are skilled in recognising changes in children's behaviour and responding quickly. Their effective responses have resulted in minimal incidents where children's behaviour has been difficult to manage.

Leaders ensure the home is a safe environment for children. They complete regular checks alongside comprehensive audits carried out by external professionals. Managers respond to these well, with actions being completed quickly.

When concerns have been raised about staff conduct, leaders have consulted well with external safeguarding professionals to seek advice on action to be taken. Staff are aware of this, and the transparent nature of working has helped staff to fully understand their roles.

Recruitment procedures have not always been effective, and key information has not been shared between the recruitment team and the registered manager. In one instance, a reference was not shared with the manager that included some significant information. Leaders have since put in new systems to monitor recruitment; however, this inconsistent sharing of information has prevented the manager from being fully assured that recruitment decisions are safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an ambitious manager who ensures that her high expectations for children are shared with staff. She is supported effectively by an equally aspirational deputy manager and responsible individual, all of whom want nothing but the best for children.

Leaders have developed a detailed monitoring system to ensure that they have comprehensive oversight of the home. This ranges from safeguarding issues and environmental changes to training. They use the system effectively in identifying themes and patterns and ensuring that if any concerns or gaps are identified they are responded to well.

Leaders have identified creative methods to continue to develop the home. As well as comprehensive monitoring, the registered manager has created several learning partnerships with similar homes. This has allowed good practice ideas to be shared and the manager to continue to think about improvements that can be made. There has also been the introduction of a new apprenticeship scheme that allows for staff to join and get a level of support and training across several residential homes run by the local authority.

Staff talk confidently of these developments. They feel empowered to fulfil their roles effectively and have now been given the autonomy to make safe decisions to help support and give children the best possible experiences.

Staff are supported through training, performance review and day-to-day feedback from the management team. Leaders have used performance reviews to support staff to consider their professional development and have identified bespoke training to support this. Staff receive supervision inconsistently, which has limited opportunities for staff to reflect on practice and their 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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32 (1))	31 December 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	31 December 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: 2571557

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Medway Council

Registered provider address: Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

Responsible individual: Andrada Pepenel

Registered manager: Elisha Kemsley

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025