

2590128

Registered provider: Seashell Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charity and provides short breaks for up to four children who may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities or sensory impairment. The home is located on a large multi-use site, which includes a special school, specialist college and accommodation for children and young people.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2023

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: 16 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
29/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The short-breaks service provides good-quality care for children with complex needs and disabilities.

Careful matching takes place, which ensures that children enjoy their stay. The manager and staff place emphasis on good-quality planned introductions. The children have a series of tea visits, and staff carry out detailed observations before their first overnight stay. Staff form close links with parents and specialist services. As a result, important information is shared from the beginning to promote good outcomes. This is a key strength of the home.

Managers and staff regularly take part in children's review meetings. They work hard to develop good partnership links. The manager has requested up-to-date copies of all the children's education, health and care plans. However, the manager has not continued to escalate her request for this information. As a result, staff are not fully informed of all the additional support required for each child.

The home and children's bedrooms are well presented. Children have access to a range of specialist equipment to meet their needs. Their interests are encouraged, and they have access to a choice of books, toys and games. However, there is some attention required to the garden, and one of the kitchen cupboards is worn. The manager has a schedule of works to carry out these repairs. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Staff support children to enjoy a range of activities, which they capture through pictures and photo books. The children visit local parks, spend time in the home doing arts and crafts and go on trips to indoor sensory facilities and ice-cream farms. This means that children have fun and build a sense of belonging with one another.

A wide variety of communication methods are used with the children in the home. Staff are skilled in their use of communication applications on electronic devices, the Picture Exchange Communication System and Makaton. Recently, staff have had training in a visual communication framework which supports children with communication difficulties to express their feelings and views. This helps staff to communicate effectively with a variety of children.

There are good-quality key-work sessions. Staff demonstrate children are making progress in their independence. They are learning skills in dressing themselves, accessing public transport and road safety. Children's wishes and feelings are captured and uploaded onto a digital platform. This is a strength of the home.

Children are reliant on staff to understand their needs. They develop warm and trusting relationships with the staff, who are attentive and skilled in understanding what children are expressing.

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

Children are supported by staff to stay safe. The core staff team knows and understands children's risks and vulnerabilities. However, on one occasion, a staff member, who was unfamiliar with the child's risk management plan and missing-from-care protocol, was used from another part of the service. As a result, there was an episode when a child went missing. He was very quickly located and returned safe and well. Additionally, the incident record was not completed thoroughly.

Positive behaviour is well promoted, and staff show care and understanding in their responses when children are distressed or upset. Staff use a wide range of de-escalation techniques. Since the last inspection, some low-level restraints have been used. These have been used as a last resort to keep children safe. However, records of restraint demonstrate children are not consistently given the opportunity to debrief in a way that is appropriate to their communication needs. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Safer recruitment practices are followed. Staff are carefully monitored and appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that unsuitable people are not recruited. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who can care for them safely.

There are safe and effective medication procedures in place to ensure that children have the appropriate medication when needed to maintain their health and emotional well-being.

The manager has ensured that fire practices in the home are safe. Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan that provides staff with details on the support they require in the event of a fire. All staff are suitably trained in fire safety, and the children take part in regular fire drills.

Staff and managers ensure that children understand the risks that may be posed online. Staff have received training in internet safety and children are actively encouraged to take part in direct work sessions to understand how to stay safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and knowledgeable. She is supported by a deputy. They have worked in the home for several years. Together, they demonstrate strong leadership, and they lead by example. Both are committed and passionate. They are ambitious for children and strive to achieve the best outcomes for them.

Staff feel well supported in their roles. They say there is effective communication. One staff member said, 'I love my job working with the children.' Another staff member said, 'The support system from the team and management is second to none.'

Leaders and managers have not always ensured that there are sufficiently knowledgeable staff available to meet children's complex needs. On one occasion, the manager did not ensure that she had sufficient oversight or evaluation of an incident in the home. This is a missed opportunity to explore any further learning following a significant event.

There is effective partnership working with a range of professionals, particularly the speech and language team, occupational therapists and nurses. They provide advice and guidance to staff to ensure that they support children in all aspects of their health and dietary needs. There are individualised plans to help staff meet the children's complex needs. However, some of the children's plans and assessments have not been reviewed and some records contain incorrect information. As a result, it is not clear if staff have the most up-to-date information in relation to children.

The manager makes good use of her internal and external monitoring systems. She has good awareness of the strengths and areas of the home to develop. However, the most recent version of the home's statement of purpose has not been received by Ofsted. The manager took immediate action to address this.

All staff have completed a wide variety of training that is bespoke to the children's complex needs. However, this training does not include information to enhance staff's understanding of specific safeguarding risks and vulnerabilities for disabled children. A recommendation has been made to address this.

The staff have been able to grow and develop their practice because of the good-quality support and regular supervision they receive. The manager has recently introduced research-informed practice through workshops, and she is planning further development days for staff. This has helped staff to understand children's experiences.

Feedback from parents and professionals is positive and complimentary. Parents spoke about how the service is a 'lifeline'. This enables families to take a break and supports children to make new friends in a safe environment. One parent spoke about the new experiences their child has been able to enjoy when on his short break. One professional said, 'The team are thorough, conscientious and hard-working. They always have the best interests of the children at heart.'

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, 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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d)) This specifically relates to ensuring that all children's specialist plans and education, health and care plans are regularly reviewed and on file.	20 October 2023
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if	20 October 2023

necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(b)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that there are suitably skilled and experienced staff available to take effective action in the event of an incident.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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;	20 October 2023

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(e)(f)(h))

This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that she has sufficient oversight of incidents and that the staff have the experience, knowledge and skills to meet children's needs.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a supportive environment that meets children's needs. This specifically relates to tidying the sensory garden area and ensuring that the kitchen unit is replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff have access to training to support children's needs. This specifically relates to ensuring that all staff complete training in safeguarding children with disabilities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained has the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience in line with their preferred method of communication. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)

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: 2590128

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Seashell Trust

Responsible individual: Bernadette White

Registered manager: Jennifer Ritchie

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

Kathryn Grindrod, His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care

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