

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 inspectors only inspected the care provision on this site.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2022.

Twelve children are currently accessing the short-break provision.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2023	Full	Good
16/01/2023	Full	Outstanding
29/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children thoroughly enjoy their short breaks at this home and receive exceptional care from a stable, skilled and experienced staff team. Children develop positive, trusting relationships with staff who care about them. Staff create a relaxed, nurturing and calm environment where children thrive.

Children experience their short breaks in small, compatible groups, which means that they have opportunities to make new friends and enjoy the time that they spend at the home.

The home is maintained to a high standard and is a homely and welcoming place for children to relax and have fun. Children have access to a range of specialist equipment that they require to meet their needs. However, the casing around the television in the lounge detracts from the homely feel. This is something that the manager is taking action to address.

Communication is a key strength of the service. Diverse methods of communicating with children are firmly embedded into the culture and practice in the home. Children are supported by trained staff, who use a variety of ways to enable children to make choices and have their voices heard. These are all bespoke to the children's preferred method of communication, for example picture exchange communication systems, photographs, objects of reference and Makaton.

There is a strong strengths-based model embedded in practice. Evidence-based approaches strengthen engagement with children. Managers and staff ensure that the children are at the heart of the service.

Managers and staff have an excellent understanding of each child's needs. They listen to children's views and consider their wishes and feelings around every aspect of their lives. Meaningful direct work is completed to help children understand road safety, online safety and to develop their independence. Furthermore, relevant documents are adapted to ensure that there is a completely inclusive approach to sharing information and seeking children's views.

Children engage in a wide range of positive activities inside and outside of the home. There are lots of photos displayed around the home. These photos show children taking part in new experiences and activities that they enjoy. One parent said, 'Since being there [name of child] has been involved in lots of activities, over and above what he would engage with at home.' This helps children to build their confidence.

Exceptionally strong multi-agency working underpins practice in the home. There are highly effective working relationships with speech and language therapists, social workers, occupational therapists and schools.

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

Safeguarding practice is highly effective with the use of high staffing ratios. Staff have an excellent understanding of children's needs, vulnerabilities and the potential risks they may be exposed to. Staff demonstrate how to report and respond to concerns. Parents say they know that their child is kept safe in the home.

Children receive excellent support to help them when they become upset. Staff understand the triggers and functions of children's behaviours and how to respond. Where restraint has been used, this has been minimal, necessary and proportionate. Recently, staff have adopted a new approach to monitoring children following restraint using research methods. This creative way means that children take part in individual debriefs in a subtle and effective way.

Appropriate consideration is given to fire safety. Each child has a personal evacuation plan on file. The plans provide important information to ensure that children are safe in the event of a fire. Staff creatively help children to understand the dangers. For example, schedules and social stories are used with children to help them understand the importance of staying safe during fire evacuations.

All staff are suitably trained in the administration of medication. The recent introduction of a new electronic recording system is highly effective and there is safe storage of medications systems, including controlled drugs.

Recruitment procedures and practices are safe and effective. Managers recently attended safer recruitment training. All staff are checked and vetted prior to working in the home to ensure that only suitable adults are employed. Good-quality induction programmes ensure that staff are fully equipped to care for children safely, in a manner that protects children's rights and dignity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is suitably experienced and qualified and is supported by a deputy manager. They work exceptionally well together and have developed a positive, child-centred culture in the home. Managers are passionate, aspirational and knowledgeable about the needs of the children. They strive to make continuous improvements to ensure that children receive exceptional, individualised care.

When staffing shortfalls arose, the manager stepped in to ensure that children continued to be cared for by people who they knew well, minimising the impact on children and families. However, during this time, some children were unable to access the service. A recommendation has been made to address this.

The registered manager has developed excellent networking opportunities with other providers. This enables the manager to continually develop her practice and to share

new and emerging themes with other professionals. The manager is highly skilled at using research to develop her knowledge and shares this with staff. This research is embedded in children's plans, direct-work sessions and daily care practices with children. Furthermore, there are regular workshops where research and learning is continually shared. This helps to ensure that staff have a deeper understanding of the model of care they provide.

Staff benefit from regular, reflective supervision sessions and frequent team meetings to help them to develop and learn. Annual appraisals also take place where targets are set for the year ahead. Individual staff are champions in the home for different areas and share information to continually improve the care provided to children.

The registered manager understands the strengths and areas for development in the home. She actively uses monitoring tools and action plans to continually improve the quality of care that staff provide for children. However, feedback from children and families is not clearly reflected in the home's review of care report. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate how children and stakeholder views contribute to the development of the service. A recommendation has been made to address this.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a supportive environment that meets the needs of children. In particular, this relates to ensuring that the television casing is removed from the lounge television to promote a homely environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that consultations with children and stakeholders are clearly reflected in the home's quality of care report. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's short breaks are not overly disrupted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 51, paragraph 10.1)

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
Gareth Dakin, His Majesty's Inspector

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