

2595128

Registered provider: Unique Care Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to four children who have a learning disability or autism. The organisation's school, which one child attends, is on the same site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision on this site.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home. All four were present at the time of the inspection and the inspector spoke with two of them.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified.

There has been a change of responsible individual since the last inspection. The chief operation officer has recently returned to the role.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 February 2025

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: 13 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2024	Full	Good
16/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
24/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children who live in this home thrive in a loving, caring and supportive environment, where children can flourish and make exceptional, sustained progress due to the support that staff provide. Staff are passionate about providing high-quality care that consistently exceeds good. Staff enjoy the time they spend with children. This remarkable, child-focused approach significantly improves children's lives and experiences. For example, children's education, behaviour, social skills, independence, communication, health and confidence all improve because of the care that they receive in this home.

Staff develop and share extremely warm and nurturing relationships with children. They provide children with consistent routines and boundaries, which creates a calm and positive environment. This supports children to understand what is expected of them. Children's feedback about the home is overwhelmingly positive. One child said they rated the home as '12 out of 10.' Another child said it was '10 out of 10.'

Staff support children sensitively, in line with each child's level of understanding, when they move into or out of the home. For example, before one child moved on, the manager and staff had multiple meetings with the local authority and external agencies to ensure they supported the child effectively. When this did not go to plan, staff sensitively supported the child to leave the home, in a way that they could understand and not feel rejected. Their time at the home was celebrated, with a party, gifts and social stories to explain to the child what was happening. This ensured that the child had a positive ending to their time in the home.

The manager and staff understand the importance of education and learning and the routine that this provides for children. They go above and beyond to ensure that children get education that meets their needs and that they are entitled to. As a result, one child is now receiving a bespoke education package and another child is receiving home tuition while a suitable education provider is sought. In addition, the home's staff continue to support one child in school holidays and at weekends to maintain their routine, which supports them to regulate and reduce their anxieties.

Children's health and well-being are prioritised. Managers and staff work well with healthcare professionals to ensure that children's health needs are met. Staff support children to attend routine health appointments. Staff also seek specialist support when required. They receive specific training to meet children's individual health needs. This enhances children's health outcomes.

The manager and staff ensure that children have opportunities to have fun with their friends. They provide children with opportunities to engage in a range of activities, which develops their confidence and promotes their independence and social skills. For example, one child has recently learned to swim and has gained their first certificate. One child is learning taekwondo and another child attends football practice. Children

have also been on holiday to the seaside. For two children, this was their first experience of going on holiday.

Children's views are at the heart of staff practice. Children's plans reflect their voice, wishes and feelings. They have regular meaningful conversations that ensure they have a voice and feel valued. When children have communication difficulties, staff are attuned to their communication styles and use these to determine their preferences, wishes and feelings.

The home environment is calm, welcoming and homely. Communal spaces are comfortably furnished and staff support children to personalise their bedrooms according to their individual needs and tastes. This ensures that children are comfortable and develop a sense of belonging.

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

Children become safer and their vulnerabilities are reducing because of the support they receive from staff. The safeguarding culture created in the home is exemplary. There are effective systems for addressing concerns. Staff know how to raise concerns or worries about children, and the manager ensures that they respond immediately. Staff receive safeguarding children training that is regularly refreshed and updated. This approach enables children to flourish in a safe and supportive environment.

Staff know children well and are attuned to their needs and risks and their presentations when they are anxious. They use this knowledge, along with regularly updated information in children's written support plans and individual risk assessments, to keep children safe. Staff talk to parents, social workers, education staff and other professionals to make sure they fully understand children's needs. As a result, staff have comprehensive guidance to help them meet all children's needs, mitigate risk and keep them safe.

Managers and staff understand how to keep children safe online. They ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, such as firewalls and parental controls. They support children to understand how to keep themselves safe online, through planned discussions and, when required, support from specialist external agencies. As a result of staff support, children's risks have significantly reduced.

Managers and staff take prompt action when there are safeguarding concerns, complaints or allegations. Records are comprehensive. The manager ensures that information is swiftly shared with appropriate professionals. This multi-agency approach helps to keep children safe. Furthermore, the manager also ensures that children are kept informed of any outcomes. This helps children to feel listened to and confident to raise concerns in the future.

Staff use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children and staff safe. Incidents have reduced over time. Physical intervention records are detailed and recorded in line with regulation. The manager has highly effective oversight of all incidents. They ensure

that staff and children are given the opportunity to reflect on incidents. The manager's oversight ensures that when used, holds are necessary and proportionate. This also helps to develop staff practice and keep children safe.

The manager and staff use research-informed practice. For example, they have worked with an occupational therapist to use sensory integration therapy with one child and provide training for staff. This enabled staff to gain a better understanding of the child's sensory needs and has improved the child's emotional and physical well-being. As a result, the child is now enjoying a better social life, and is less isolated and more independent. Their needs are being consistently met and, as a result, incidents are reducing.

Staff have implemented new night-time routines for children following guidance from occupational therapists. They have reduced children's access to blue light technology and are using therapy-approved lighting. Children are now sleeping better. As a result, two children no longer use sleep medication. This has also had a positive effect on one child's lifelong health condition and the frequency of their seizures has reduced. This has the potential to be life changing for the child.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. Staff respond to children's individual needs and help children to explore their identity. This enables children to develop a positive sense of self and value their own identity.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is a confident, ambitious and inspirational leader. She leads by example, providing highly effective oversight. A visible responsible individual and a conscientious deputy manager support her. Together, they have formed a formidable management team that is ambitious and has high expectations and aspirations for the home, the children and the staff. This leadership inspires staff to provide exceptional care. Managers have created an open and inclusive culture that places children at the centre of practice. Feedback from staff, professionals and children about the manager is exceptional.

Managers have excellent relationships with the children. They go above and beyond to spend time with children and are avid advocates for them when needed. They have exceptional knowledge of the children's starting points and what they have accomplished since living in the home. Managers listen and respond to children's views on the home's development and their own goals and progress. They place the children at the front and centre of the home. They strive to provide outstanding outcomes for children and improve the operation of the home. This ethos is shared by a highly motivated and enthusiastic staff team.

The manager has developed extremely effective monitoring systems to review the quality of care that children receive. The management team has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. They complete regular audits to scrutinise the performance of the home and children's outcomes. The manager uses the

independent person's reports and an abundance of audits and development plans to continuously develop the service and ensure that staff's practice consistently exceeds the standard of good.

The manager is very well regarded and is nurturing towards the staff team. This means that staff work in an environment where they feel valued and well supported. Staff say they like working in the home. They receive regular high-quality, reflective supervision sessions and appraisals, which help them develop and achieve. Team meetings are also regular and reflective and support the staff to work together to provide consistent care for children.

Research is embedded in staff's practice. For example, while sensory integration training was initially undertaken to primarily support one child, learning from this is being used to support all children. This is making an exceptional difference to the lives and experiences of children in areas such as improved behaviour, communication and health.

The manager ensures that when there are shortfalls in practice, she responds quickly. Incidents are fully investigated, and learning is identified to prevent reoccurrence. For example, colour coded alarm watches to alert staff to administer medication have been introduced following medication errors.

Partnership working is a strength. Feedback from external professionals and parents is excellent. One parent said, 'They are a godsend. They are always coming up with new things to make [name of child] happy, comfortable and things for him to do. They are next level. They did not give up when he was in crisis. They worked through it. He gets constant love and support. Now he is shining bright.' In addition, one professional said, 'Staff have a really good understanding of [name of child] and his needs. I was in a meeting last week with the manager and the way she talked about him, she could be his parent. She will fight and advocate for [name of child]. He has a really good lived experience.'

The remarkably strong leadership of the home and the excellent quality of care create an environment where staff are proud to work and children are proud to live.

No requirements or recommendations were made following this inspection.

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: 2595128

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Unique Care Group Ltd

Responsible individual: Louise Tolley

Registered manager: Lauren Gallagher

Inspector

Sonia Sullivan, Social Care Inspector

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