

2605508

Registered provider: Cambridgeshire County Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides short breaks for up to 4 children with diagnosed learning difficulties and/or complex health needs. The home offers long-term placements for 4 children.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2022.

Inspection date: 24 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 8 December 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of the inspection, the registered manager had given in their notice. They were not present at the inspection. The newly appointed responsible individual led the inspection and has applied to register with Ofsted. Plans are in place to recruit to the vacant post of manager.

There has been limited progress in addressing the requirements set at the last inspection. Inconsistent oversight and unclear leadership have contributed to weaknesses in practice. However, with the appointment of a new responsible individual there are early signs of improved stability and a focused approach to driving improvement.

Leaders have developed an ambitious action plan that demonstrates an understanding of the identified areas of concern. This includes providing practice-development workshops for all staff and a full review of policies, guidance and practice. This plan is in the initial stages of implementation and the impact is not yet visible in practice.

Children appear happy. Staff know the children well and interactions are warm and caring. When children seek appropriate physical affection, staff respond sensitively. They use a playful and engaging approach that children respond to positively, which shows children have trust and comfort in their relationships with staff.

Staff use a variety of communication methods to support them to understand the children's wishes and feelings. However, key-work sessions are not undertaken frequently and are poorly recorded. This means children's voices are not captured consistently or used to inform wider planning and decision-making.

The home is spacious and has positive features such as personalised bedrooms, sensory resources and accessible toys. However, there is still an institutional feel to the home. There are unfinished repairs and a stark difference between the short-breaks and residential areas of the building. The bathrooms in particular look very clinical and undermine efforts to create a warm, nurturing and homely environment.

Staff have managed significant incidents, some of which have required the use of physical intervention. Records are not always clear as to why physical intervention has been used. Staff do not always receive structured conversations afterwards, which limits opportunities to identify patterns and trends. Staff do not receive adequate support or opportunities to learn from their practice. Although recent input from a principal instructor has begun to strengthen staff confidence, these developments are in the early stages and not fully embedded in practice.

Staff have received training to help them develop their understanding of and skills in record-keeping, however, records continue to be inconsistent and at times are hard to read. As a result, they do not always provide a clear and reliable account of children's lived experiences.

The statement of purpose needs to be updated to reflect the staffing structure and the experience and qualifications of staff.

Leaders and managers have met 2 of the 5 requirements set at the last inspection. Three requirements have been restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/12/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/03/2025	Full	Good
30/10/2023	Full	Good
09/08/2022	Full	Good

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 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)) This has been restated.	29 May 2026
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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;	29 May 2026

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h)) This has been restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)(c)) This has been restated.	29 May 2026

Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that systems are in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive regular supervision so that they can reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of their children. The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a homely rather than institutional impression. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the staffing structure and experience and qualifications of staff are included in the statement of purpose, (‘Guide to the

Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14,
paragraph 3.5)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2605508

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cambridgeshire County Council

Registered provider address: Sunley House, Summers Hill Drive, Papworth
Everard, Cambridge CB23 3AB

Responsible individual: Mark Leadbetter

Registered manager: Andreia Alves da Silva

Inspector

Sallie Bloomfield, Social Care Inspector

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