

2647153

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority and provides care for up to six children with social and emotional difficulties. The home consists of a four bedroomed house and a separate two-bedroomed bungalow for children working towards independent living. At the time of this inspection, there were six children living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2021 and holds the relevant qualification.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 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: 3 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/07/2023	Full	Good
14/12/2022	Full	Good
15/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff are passionate and devoted in the way that they support children to do well. They place a strong focus on education, recognising the positive impact this can have on children's future life opportunities. Staff have consistently shown over a long period of time that even in very difficult circumstances they never give up on children. The progress children make considering their starting points, is remarkable.

Since the last inspection, staff have supported one child, upon reaching adulthood, to move to more suitable accommodation to meet their needs and progress on their unique individual journey. The child with the help of their dedicated staff team and a local authority housing project, was able to learn key independent life skills over several months and successfully secure their own flat in the community. The child was able to take all their bedroom furniture with them to help furnish their property. They stay in regular contact with staff and staff are helping them move into their new home. The child commented that staff went above and beyond for them and the care they received was amazing.

Children who move into the home are welcomed with sensitivity and warmth. Trusting relationships are quickly formed, to help children to settle and gain a good sense of belonging. For example, the meticulous planning for the most recent child who moved in made it a real success and all the other children living in the home were involved in their journey. In addition, a holiday to Tenerife had been organised for the five children already residing in the home and the manager invited the new child prior to them moving in to join them all. The child agreed and took a member of staff that they had a good relationship with from their current home with them. The child had a great time getting to know the new children and staff they would be living with. A child stated that they loved their holiday, and it was a really good bonding experience.

Staff are proactive and work positively with children's families to ensure children enjoy meaningful time with their loved ones. Staff help children to take every opportunity possible to ensure that strong relationships are maintained and sensitively support children if they choose not to have contact with their family. This helps support children to develop and maintain a sense of their own identity and promotes their well-being.

Staff are responsive and considerate in supporting children with their identity needs. They are respectful with children's choice of pronouns and are well-informed. This enables them to provide clear information effectively to answer any exploratory questions children ask. Staff celebrate children's talents and harness their interests, enabling children to achieve and flourish. All children have a love of music, and some are musically talented, there are drums, guitars and a keyboard dotted around the home and children often play songs and sing together. The children are creative, and their artwork is put onto canvases and displayed proudly on the walls of the home.

Staff are innovative in their approach and have developed a unique way of communicating with children during planned activities. They have written a series of children's stories where one character takes on the needs of a child they are supporting, and the other character gives advice on what they can do to meet those needs and self-care. This enables staff to have important delicate conversations to assist children in developing an understanding of their own needs and emotions. Staff use different voices for each character and have made audio versions of the bespoke stories for children to listen to when on their own. This helps children gain a positive sense of their own identity and build emotional resilience. The member of staff who created these books won a local authority care award for going above and beyond.

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

Children say that they feel safe living in the home and have staff they trust that they would go to if they had any concerns. Compassionate staff take time to listen to children's fears and respond to them with tenderness and warmth. Staff promptly take appropriate action to allay any fears and promote children's mental and emotional well-being.

Staff know children well and are acutely aware of each child's individual risks. Well written and detailed risk assessments address the known vulnerabilities of the children. This helps staff have the most up to date information to effectively inform their practice. Despite some children being particularly vulnerable, staff are not risk averse and continue to take a proportionate approach when supporting and enabling children to take age-appropriate risks. Children spend quality independent time with their friends in the community without any unnecessary restrictions. This helps children to develop their self-identity and to form strong and important relationships with their peers.

Staff are skilled at communicating with children and are quickly able to establish trusting and secure relationships with them. There have been a low number of adverse incidents. When an incident of concern did occur, this was dealt with immediately by experienced staff who stayed with the child around the clock and took appropriate action to ensure the child was safe and protected from further harm. Incident records are robust and there is strong and effective managerial oversight. Learning from incidents and the subsequent changes to practice have positively reduced the number of incidents that have taken place.

When children go missing, staff promptly follow a clear protocol and take well-coordinated action to reduce the risk of harm to the children. Staff inform all relevant professional bodies to proactively help protect children and bring about their safe return home. Learning takes place after each episode of children going missing from care, and new information gained is shared and utilised to enable the most effective response in helping keep children safe in the future. Through this work missing from home incidents have significantly decreased, which is noteworthy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leaders and managers lead by example and are ambitious in their approach. They use children's aspirations and dreams to set a culture that all staff share and work enthusiastically to achieve. Strong leadership underpins the whole ethos of the home and ensures that excellent care is consistently delivered to improve children's lives and enable them to experience positive outcomes. The two assistant managers have recently won an award each at the local authority care awards in the "genuinely valued category."

Children are consistently supported by an experienced, skilled, and stable staff team. The managers have high expectations of their staff and inspire them to feel empowered and fully utilise their individual expertise. Staff commented about how much they love and enjoy working in the home and how they are encouraged to take on additional responsibility to help to ensure that the home runs efficiently and effectively. For example, one member of staff has developed a bespoke seven stage independent living skills folder for all children to work through and complete to help improve their independence. A child commented they loved learning new skills and that it will help when the time comes for them to move into the bungalow.

Records are written in a child-focused way and reflect well how staff support children's everyday lives. Children contribute to their records and their voice is strongly evidenced throughout, clearly showing what is important to them and a focus on their hopes and dreams for their futures. Children are praised and their achievements no matter how small are celebrated. Records clearly illustrate the considerable progress individual children have made from their starting points.

The managers benefit from having formed strong relationships with external agencies, recognising the importance this has in achieving positive outcomes for children. The managers advocate on behalf of children to ensure that their voice is heard, their wishes are respected, and their rights are promoted. Children are encouraged to take part in important meetings that decide their future and focus on their well-being ensuring they have a say in the support they receive. Five professionals and one family member spoke well about the home and the support staff provide to children and no concerns were raised.

The home provides a safe space that helps children feel a sense of belonging. The nurturing and friendly atmosphere that staff create helps children to express themselves and flourish. The environment it is extremely well maintained and has a loving family home feel to it. Children are proud of their home, especially their bedrooms, which are uniquely decorated to reflect their individual hobbies and interests.

No requirements or recommendations have been raised at 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: 2647153

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: West Sussex County Council, Democratic Services, County Hall, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RQ

Responsible individual: Hayley Grover

Registered manager: Eerik Sjostedt

Inspector

Gary Turney, social care inspector

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