

2675807

Registered provider: Virtue Therapeutic Care and Education (East Sussex) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and is registered to provide care for up to eight children who experience social and emotional difficulties. There are currently three children living in the home.

The organisation has a school on the same site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2022.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2024

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: 19 July 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because they build and maintain positive relationships with staff. Interactions between staff and children are warm and nurturing. One child told the inspector that they particularly like spending time with their favourite staff. The registered manager has plans in place to encourage the child to spend time with other staff members so that there are more people they feel comfortable to approach when they need support.

Children benefit from staff providing them with access to a range of activities. Children can also request other activities of their choice, and these are arranged for them. The garden is very popular with children as a space to enjoy physical activities at home. Staff have arranged for one child to continue with community-based hobbies despite him moving to the home from a different area. Children's positive experiences are captured in memory books.

All children currently living in the home access full-time education in settings other than the on-site school. However, if children arrive at the home and require a slow integration into a mainstream education, the on-site school is used for this purpose.

Children are helped and supported to learn to live more independently. One child has recently completed exams and has secured a college placement. They also have a part-time job that they can travel to and from independently. The child told the inspector that they like living at the home and that staff have been good at supporting them to learn independent living skills.

Children's wishes and feelings are listened to. When children's views cannot be acted on, staff and managers explain the reasons for this. Children say that they know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care and are confident that their voices will be heard.

Children are being supported to live together harmoniously, but this has not always been the case. For a period of time that ended around three months ago, relationships between some children were not positive, leading to one child being physically harmed. The child told inspectors that staff did their best to support them. However, the child's records do not demonstrate that they were given nurturing support after incidents.

Staff support children to spend positive time with their families. One parent told the inspector that they are happy with the way their child is being looked after and that they appreciate good communication from staff.

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

Children's safety and well-being are promoted by effective joint working. When managers and staff have concerns about children's safety, they liaise appropriately with external professionals. This ensures a shared understanding of children's risks and how those risks will be managed.

Due to the positive relationships enjoyed between children and staff, the use of physical restraint can sometimes be avoided because staff are able to make successful use of de-escalation techniques when children experience emotions that cause distress. On the occasions when physical restraint is necessary to ensure children's safety, its use is proportionate to the situation. Overall, the frequency of the use of physical restraint has reduced over time.

Managers are proactive in their approach to ensuring that children and staff have access to a range of professionals to enhance their knowledge about safety. For example, the police have been invited to the home to speak to children about the risks associated with going missing from care and from displaying aggressive behaviour. Representatives from the fire and rescue service have been to the home to discuss fire safety with children and staff, and the local authority designated officer (LADO) has delivered safeguarding training to staff.

When children make complaints or allegations about staff, managers respond robustly to ensure the safety of children. They follow agreed procedures, consult with the LADO and put safety plans in place.

When children go missing from care, staff take effective action to ensure that children return safely and quickly. Staff inform, and work closely with, appropriate agencies, such as the police. However, records do not demonstrate that when children return to the home, staff speak to them about the risks associated with going missing or help children to identify safer solutions to problems than leaving the home.

There is a comprehensive process in place to ensure that new children's needs are compatible with the needs of children already living at the home. Effective communication with children's parents and other professionals ensures that managers have a good understanding of children's strengths and vulnerabilities. However, compatibility risk assessments do not inform staff about the strategies they need to put in place to mitigate against identified risks, and they do not demonstrate sufficient consideration about the skills of the staff team to meet children's needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is committed to improving outcomes for children and has a clear vision about how this can be achieved. She is supported well by senior leaders, who are readily available to provide advice. The registered manager also receives good support

from two deputy managers who have complementary skills. Therefore, the management team is strong and effective.

The registered manager has sound awareness of the home's strengths and weaknesses. There is a comprehensive plan in place to enhance staff confidence and develop their skills further. This demonstrates that the registered manager takes effective action when she identifies shortfalls in the quality of care being provided to children.

The registered manager has successfully improved management monitoring and this is evident in children's records. As a result of her oversight, the registered manager recognised that staff would benefit from additional tools to understand good safeguarding practice and created personalised learning tools in line with the needs of the staff team. Some of the children joined in some of the learning sessions.

Staff receive supervision at agreed intervals. This provides opportunities to expand their knowledge and time to reflect on practice. Professional development goals are clearly recorded for all staff. Staff respect the registered manager. They say that they benefit from a sensitive approach to helping them learn when they make mistakes.

When serious events take place, managers ensure that any learning is shared with the staff team. Staff members say that they enjoy such learning because it helps to keep children's welfare at the centre of their work.

Staff receive training that is relevant to the needs of the children they are looking after. As a result, children are looked after by skilled and well-informed staff.

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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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)(ii)(iv)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff support children to understand and manage their own risks, provide effective support to children following the incidents, and ensure that compatibility risk assessments demonstrate how identified risks will be mitigated when new children move into the home.	30 September 2024

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: 2675807

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Virtue Therapeutic Care and Education (East Sussex) Limited

Registered provider address: Moran House Suites 7-8, 449-451 High Road, Wilesden, London NW10 2JJ

Responsible individual: Matthew Wakeling

Registered manager: Alison Brushett

Inspector

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector

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