

2675807

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

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides care for up to eight children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection date: 21 November 2024

Date of last inspection: 13 August 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspectors evaluated:

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

Inspectors have 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.

Since the full inspection, the home has been unsettled and there has been a high number of significant incidents. Despite this, the children living at the home continue to make some progress.

Children frequently make allegations about staff. Overall, these are managed appropriately with involvement from external safeguarding professionals. However, at times, managers lack professional curiosity and do not implement safety plans for staff working arrangements once an allegation has been made. Additionally, not all allegations are thoroughly investigated, outcomes of allegations are not clearly recorded, and there is no monitoring of patterns and trends. These shortfalls have not had a negative impact on children's safety but do mean that strategies for reducing allegations have not been identified.

Despite the frequency of allegations, children develop positive relationships with staff. One child spoken to during the inspection said that they are happy at the home and particularly enjoy being able to do lots of different activities. They were observed to be relaxed and happy in the company of staff. The child could identify adults who they trust and would speak to if they are worried about something.

Children make good progress in relation to attendance and achievement in education. One child, who did not attend school before they lived at the home, now attends education full time. Another child has a reduced school timetable. Staff understand the importance of predictable structure and routine. They ensure that the child remains engaged in positive activities when they are not at school.

At times, children struggle to live together harmoniously. When there are disagreements between children, staff provide appropriate support. Staff talk to children about incidents and help them to think about other ways they may have been able to express how they feel.

Staff have sound understanding of children's vulnerabilities. When new risks are identified, staff are made aware and are provided with strategies to help children to stay safe. However, staff do not proactively help children to understand their own risks and behaviours. As a result, children are not given enough support to take responsibility for their actions, which increases the risk of incidents reoccurring.

Since the full inspection, one child has left the home because managers recognised that their needs could not be safely met alongside the other children living in the home. There has been a missed opportunity to learn from this situation to try and avoid other children's placements ending earlier than expected.

Staff speak extremely positively about working at the home. They find the new morning debriefs very helpful and say that they help to ensure that children experience a consistent approach from staff. They appreciate the support that they receive from managers and say that managers are receptive to ideas about different ways of working.

Records demonstrate that staff have access to a wide range of training that equips them to meet the needs of the children they are looking after. Staff have received bespoke safeguarding training from external professionals, which has had a positive impact on their confidence to address safeguarding concerns.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2024	Full	Good
19/07/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/01/2023	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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; 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)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff support children to understand and manage their own risks and ensure that staff working arrangements are assessed when allegations are made.	9 January 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that, when serious events are notified to appropriate people, the home's record of the event includes a description of the action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.14)

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 and 8, 449 to 451 High Road, Wilesden, London NW10 2JJ

Responsible individual: Matthew Wakeling

Registered manager: Alison Brushett

Inspectors

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector

Helen Simmons, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager

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