

2716876

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to five children aged between eight and 18 who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were five children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Children refer to the staff caring for them as 'adults' and so they are referred to as such throughout this report.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2024.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 2025

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	requires improvement to be 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: 1 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/10/2024	Full	Good
28/11/2023	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Adults are highly responsive to the children and show interest in their lives. As a result, the children are listened to and valued. The children describe positive relationships with adults. The children can approach adults with any worries and trust that they will be receptive and take the necessary steps to resolve any concerns they have.

Adults have regular conversations with the children. These happen both naturally and in planned ways. Adults routinely encourage the children to give their views on activities, meals and any planned changes to the home environment. This ensures that the children are fully involved in decisions about their daily lives and the care provided to them.

Children speak highly of the activities they have experienced. These include fun days out, holidays and thoughtful birthday celebrations. When at home, the children enjoy spending quality time with the adults, choosing to play a game, doing crafting activities or watching a movie with them.

Children are making steady progress. This is especially noticeable in relation to their emotional well-being. Adults acknowledge the children's feelings and support them to better understand and manage their emotions.

Adults work closely with education professionals to support the children to attend school or college and engage with learning. When children are not able to attend education full time, they are supported by adults to engage in learning at home with tutors. Adults attend education meetings and persistently communicate with education professionals to advocate for the children's educational needs.

When possible, the children spend regular time with their families, which is supported by the adults' effective communication with them. This has resulted in good working relationships between the adults and the children's family members.

When children move on from the home, there are clear plans in place for adults to keep in touch with the children, in line with their wishes and needs, keeping positive links and relationships once they have moved on. However, when children move into the home, more consideration needs to be given to the training adults require to meet the needs of the children, and to planning and considering the impact of a new child moving in on the children already living there.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Adults respond to incidents, showing respect and care for the children. This is reflected in the language used in communicating with them, both in person and in records that are kept.

Children feel safe with adults, who understand the risks for them. One child said, 'This is the best home I have ever lived in. I have never felt this safe before. Things I was doing before I don't do now because I am safe.'

All health and safety checks are up to date and regular maintenance is completed by a dedicated team of maintenance professionals. The home has recently benefited from some new garden decking and redecoration, and has good general upkeep which contributes to the homely feel.

New adults are recruited to the home safely. The manager has good oversight of the checks carried out and these checks are completed in a timely way.

The children mostly have positive relationships with one another and are encouraged to get along in group activities but their own time is also respected. Children are given ample opportunities to discuss and explore any worries or feelings.

Children do not often go missing from the home. For one child, since moving to the home, this risk has gone from being significant to low, with no incidents of going missing from home since they moved in. However, another child's risk assessment was not clear about expectations of staff in when they should report the child missing from home to police. This caused delay during one incident.

When medication is administered to children, this is mostly done in line with guidance. However, on one occasion, there was a medication error which required a more proportionate response from the manager to ensure this is not repeated and staff have the support required to avoid this happening in the future.

Physical restraint is rarely used in the home, but when it is used, it is generally in line with the regulations. However, on one occasion, an adult used physical restraint without having received the required training. This did not cause harm to the child.

Adults are provided with a comprehensive induction and with regular training. However, they have not been provided with all the training necessary to meet the immediate needs of some of the children. Training has not been provided to allow adults to understand the method of care.

The manager strives to ensure that rules and boundaries implemented for children do not feel institutional, creating a family feel in the home. However, during the inspection, a change in boundaries was made which was not included in a risk assessment or adequately shared with the adults to allow them to understand what was expected of them to keep the children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager knows the children well and has excellent relationships with adults and children. Adults speak highly of the manager, the support she provides and the example she sets, providing excellent role modelling of expected behaviours.

The manager is passionate about ensuring that the needs of the children are met. She challenges professionals when needed to ensure that the care plans for children are progressing and advocates their wishes and feelings and their best interests.

Adults are provided with a high level of support through good-quality supervisions, group reflective discussions, team meetings and ad hoc catch-ups with the leaders and managers. Adults praise the manager for her dedication in ensuring that they are supported.

External professionals speak highly of the care children receive from adults in the home. Communication was highlighted as an area of strength, as well as the emotional warmth and care provided to the children.

Children's views are respected, heard and acted on whenever possible. There are regular opportunities for children to share their views in house meetings and discussions with the adults and managers. The children said they feel heard and respected.

The manager has good oversight through monitoring practices. She understands the home's strengths and areas where development is needed, which drives the improvement planning through close communication with the adults.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the manager should ensure that risk assessments are completed before any changes to boundaries to allow adults to take appropriate action in keeping children safe. This also relates to ensuring that missing-from-home risk assessments are clear.	19 August 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home. 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. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) In particular, the manager should ensure that specific training relating to the needs of the children they care for is provided to adults in a timely way, and that all adults will be trained in the use of restraint before using restraint techniques.	19 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication. When errors are made, the registered person should ensure that appropriate action is taken to ensure learning is taken from the error to help prevent further errors being made. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival, as well as the needs of children who are already living in the home. Preparation work should be completed with all the children so that they feel as comfortable as possible with a new child moving in. Allowing time between children moving in and out of the home should reflect the home's ethos. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.7)

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: 2716876

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Registered provider address: 62 The Street, Rustington, Littlehampton BN16 3NR

Responsible individual: Matthew Langley

Registered manager: Claire Jones

Inspector

Faye McCarthy, Social Care Inspector

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