

2774622

Registered provider: London Borough of Sutton

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a multi-building children's home. This children's home provides care for up to six children in up to three buildings. It is registered to provide care for children who may have social or emotional difficulties.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted as a multi-building children's home on 5 September 2024. This is the first inspection.

At the time of this inspection, there were six children living in three of the properties of the home. The inspectors spoke to three children during the inspection.

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 January 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	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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive high-quality, individualised care that positively influences their outcomes. Staff understand children's complex needs. They are resilient when managing behaviours that challenge and are dedicated to helping children build positive relationships and trust in staff. Additionally, children receive strong support in understanding and managing their feelings and emotions. As a result, children feel stable and secure in their homes.

Children have opportunities to have their say. They are encouraged to give their views via key-work sessions, through meetings or directly to staff, who take time to listen and act on their wishes when possible.

Staff are highly committed to promoting children's education. As a result, several children have re-engaged in learning after a long absence. When children face setbacks or are not making expected progress, staff put in significant effort to help them overcome these challenges, even when children show frustration or resistance. Staff maintain strong communication with the children's education providers and virtual schools, advocating to ensure children have access to the resources they need.

Staff meet children's health needs well. They support children to attend medical appointments and encourage them to engage with specialist services when needed, including child and adolescent mental health services. Staff talk with children to help them understand the importance of looking after their own health. This helps children to know that there is help available and they can ask for support when they are worried.

Staff understand that it is important for children to maintain relationships with the people who are special to them. Staff provide support and arrange for children to spend quality time with their family when it is safe for them to do so.

Children have good structure and routines in the home. They have opportunities to try new experiences in the community. This includes faith-based activities. Most children engage in these activities and also learn important life skills, such as cooking, cleaning, and self-care. This helps them to prepare for adulthood.

Children's rooms are personalised, and they have access to everything they need in the home. However, some maintenance repairs have not been addressed in several months. Additionally, internal cameras have been installed throughout the premises. Information about the cameras is included in the children's guide. The cameras are not in active use, as there are currently no assessed needs for children to have this level of monitoring. Staff do not consult with children about the function of the cameras or their continued presence in the home. Children's opinions and understanding of their use are not therefore confirmed.

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

The children spoken to say that they feel safe. Because of the relationships children have with staff, they can identify people they trust and who they are comfortable and confident to talk to if they have concerns.

Children have comprehensive plans and risk assessments, and staff have a clear understanding of children's known and potential risks. Staff receive support from a therapist to deepen their understanding of the children's individual needs. Children benefit from regular planned and informal key-working sessions. During these, staff help children by addressing specific risks, building resilience, developing coping strategies and managing challenging life situations. Children are learning how to form healthy relationships, stay safe online, and resolve conflicts in their personal relationships.

Staff respond appropriately when children go missing from home. Each child has an individualised plan, which staff are familiar with and follow. Staff work closely with professionals as well as the children's families and friends. They make efforts to stay in contact with children and encourage their safe return. When children return, staff consult with them to understand their reasons for going missing and to work to prevent future occurrences. They also ensure return home interviews are carried out. As a result, these incidents have decreased for most children.

Physical intervention is rarely used. When needed, staff apply this appropriately to prevent harm to the child or others. Children talk about these incidents during timely, post-incident debriefs. Incident reports are descriptive. However, one record did not include the manager's evaluation or confirm that a debrief had occurred for the staff involved in the physical intervention.

Safer recruitment records show that leaders and managers undertake the majority of the necessary checks when new staff start working at the home. Greater scrutiny over the reasons for staff leaving previous roles where they worked with children or vulnerable adults is needed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager. Leaders and managers demonstrate a genuine commitment to the children in their care and strive to make a positive difference to their lives. There is a stable and dedicated staff team. They enjoy working together and are cohesive in their practice. They provide a good family-style atmosphere and consistency of care for children.

Staff say that they feel well supported by leaders and managers. They report a good, supportive team culture. Team meetings are used well as learning and development opportunities where staff collectively review their work practice and the needs of children. Staff benefit from regular reflective supervision, covering a broad agenda with important consideration given to the needs and progress of children.

Leaders and managers offer staff a range of online and face-to-face training. There are regular in-house training sessions, some of which are delivered by a team of therapists. Not all staff have completed the training offered. The manager and the learning and development team oversee staff training and development needs. They do not ensure the monitoring records accurately reflect the training that some staff require that is relevant to children's individual needs. This does not detract from how staff care for and support children.

Feedback from parents and professionals is positive. Staff's dedication and ability to engage and provide individualised care for children are valued and widely recognised as a strength of this home. The registered manager is responsive when professionals make suggestions to improve communication with the home, and he takes action to improve the multi-agency working.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice as set out in regulations 31-33. In particular, this relates to ensuring that, if a person has previously worked with children or vulnerable adults, verification is sought for why the employment ended and all gaps in employment are explored. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint enable them to review the use of measure to identify effective practice. In particular, the records should include confirmation that the user of the measure was spoken to and the record is accurate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person, in line with the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home, should ensure that there is a robust oversight of the training completed by staff so that they can be assured that all staff are supported in their continuous development and learning. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children have a nurturing and homely environment at all times. In particular, that any repairs and maintenance tasks are completed without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are proactive in talking to children about their home environment. In particular, staff should seek children's views and understanding on the presence and use of CCTV cameras in the communal areas of the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.13)

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: 2774622

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: London Borough of Sutton

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, St. Nicholas Way, Sutton SM1 1EA

Responsible individual: Angela Killalea

Registered manager: Craig Edmunds

Inspectors

Aneta Wasilewska, Social Care Inspector
Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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