

2802655

Registered provider: Medway Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to five children who may experience emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since the home was registered in October 2024. This is the first inspection of the home.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 April 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: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by skilled and passionate staff, who are led by a driven and focused management team. Children are happy in the home and have made good progress. They have learned to express themselves in positive ways and this has led to a reduction in behaviour incidents.

Children who have been out of formal education for several years have been supported and encouraged to try again. Leaders have worked closely with both social workers and external education professionals to create individual plans for children. Children have engaged with this well. They are all working towards completing relevant exams and qualifications over forthcoming months and have a clear academic and vocational pathway plan. Children speak with great pride about this achievement, recognising how significant it is in terms of giving them more options for their future.

Children participate in a wide range of activities, all of which are based on individual requests. Staff are creative in the way they support and encourage children to try new things, such as local outward-bound trips, theme parks, trips to the seaside and playing board games.

Social workers speak positively about the impact that staff are making on children. Small steps to progress are shared and celebrated, and staff advocate strongly to ensure that children's views are heard. Children trust staff and know that they have their best interests at heart. They truly feel that they are heard and involved when it comes to important decisions.

When children move into the home, this is planned with care and attention. Staff meet with children prior to them moving in, so that they can get to know each other. This means that staff know the needs and preferences of children before they arrive and children are prepared for their move. As a result, children settle quickly and form positive, trusting relationships with staff. Similarly, when children move on from the home, this is planned carefully alongside the child to ensure that they move to the right place at a pace that best meets children's needs.

Children are supported to maintain positive relationships with their friends in the community. They are proud to invite friends to the home to be able to spend some time and enjoy activities together. Staff support children and work well with their families to ensure that they can spend positive time together.

All children speak positively about staff, saying that the way staff support them is the best thing about living there. One child spoke about how supportive everyone is and that even if they were having a 'wobbly week' staff knew how to support them, and this was really helping.

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

The safeguarding culture in the home is firmly underpinned by positive, trusting relationships between children and staff. Staff sit alongside children to provide a safe space for them to talk about their worries, or situations that may place them at risk. As a result, children are involved and engaged in the support they need to become safer.

Staff know the children well and understand their needs, strengths and vulnerabilities. They use this understanding to ensure that well-informed safety plans are in place. Staff support children to help educate them and help them make safer choices. For one child in particular, that has meant that the risks associated with them going missing from home have greatly reduced.

When children go missing, staff are proactive and take all reasonable steps to try to find the children. Communication with relevant professionals is excellent and every effort is made to try to bring a child back home as quickly as possible. When children return, they are met with love, care and nurture. This helps children to feel cared for and know that the staff are looking out for them.

The strong safeguarding culture is enhanced by training for staff. Staff are well trained and evaluated to ensure that they understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. There is a comprehensive training plan in place for all staff. As well as ensuring good levels of training for core subjects, such as health and safety and fire prevention, bespoke training courses are delivered to meet the changing needs of children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a registered manager and two deputy managers. All three have a shared vision and aspiration of what the home can achieve and are proud of the impact they have already made. The registered manager provides clear direction to staff to achieve positive outcomes for children.

This is a newly registered home. Managers have demonstrated good oversight and leadership to identify and address any shortfalls in practice to ensure that the service delivers good, child-centred care.

Leaders and staff are strong advocates for the children. They represent children's views effectively in the professional network to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of decision-making.

Staff are supported to understand and develop in their roles through effective supervisions and regular team meetings. Supervisions enable staff to fully explore the impact of the work and some of the challenges that working in a children's home can bring. When staff need additional support to fulfil their roles, comprehensive support plans are put in place to help achieve this. Staff talk positively about the support that supervision provides and praise the consistency of this.

There are good monitoring systems in place to support the manager to know what is happening on a day-to-day basis, specifically in relation to oversight of incidents. All records are signed off by the manager or one of the deputies. This ensure that records are clear, relevant and written in language that is child friendly.

Children are making good progress; however, internal plans are not consistently explicit in terms of some of the children's individual targets and support needs, to achieve them. This creates a risk that managers may not have full oversight of children's progress, and staff were not able to articulate clearly how they provide support in relation to some desired outcomes and aspirations for children.

External monitoring takes place monthly by an independent visitor. Managers use these reports well to help improve practice. However, these reports are not shared with Ofsted as required by regulation.

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 registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a))	30 May 2025
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))	30 May 2025

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: 2802655

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

Responsible individual: James Harman

Registered manager: Jessie Hammell

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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