

SC008484

Registered provider: Brookfield House

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is individually owned and is registered to provide care for up to six children aged between five and 18 years old. The home's statement of purpose describes caring for children with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities (emotional and social difficulties).

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

There is currently no registered manager in place.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/06/2019	Full	Good
23/10/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children's home is homely, warm and comfortable. There is a large garden with play equipment, such as a trampoline, and a well-equipped games room. Children can get some exercise, play with staff and interact with each other. Children's bedrooms are comfortable, but lack individuality. Children should be offered the opportunity to make some choices about how their rooms are decorated.

All the children are in full-time education. The acting manager and staff communicate well with the children's schools and ensure that they are up to date with the plans for the children. Children are supported and encouraged to attend school by staff. The inspector spoke to a headteacher of one of the schools. He said, 'Attendance is great, [name of child] has come on leaps and bounds.'

The children have individualised plans that aim to increase their independence and engagement with the world, while simultaneously ensuring their safety. Staff are aware of children's routines and behaviours. This means that staff can offer support and divert them to different activities if they notice that they are becoming unhappy.

The inspector observed warm, comfortable relationships between children and staff. Staff provide nurturing care to children. The inspector spoke to an independent reviewing officer for one of the children, who said, '[Name of child] has blossomed with the warmth that the staff have shown him. He is nurtured, supported and given lots of positives.' This gentle nurturing care helps the children feel a sense of belonging and security.

Leisure activities are promoted. Children enjoy a variety of out-of-school activities, from swimming and embroidery for one child, to scouts and archery for another. The staff organise days out together and the children have fun with staff. This means that children are building their confidence and increasing their self-esteem, which will help them as they grow up and start to have more time independently.

Staff have organised events which children have taken part in, such as 'a month of kindness' where each child participated in an act of kindness every day for a month. The children have also participated in community activities, such as providing hot meals for a local homeless people's charity. This promotes a feeling of kindness and responsibility within the wider society for the children.

Children's moves in and out of the home are managed well. Each child that leaves takes with them a 'journey book' and a film of all their 'highlights' at the home. This helps them to celebrate and remember their time at the home and promotes understanding of their time in care as part of their life's journey.

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

Children have detailed risk assessments and safety plans which all the staff are aware of. One child told the inspector, 'It's happiness, I feel safe here.' Children's welfare is promoted, and they are effectively safeguarded.

Children's behaviour is analysed and managed well. Staff take the time to understand what the children need individually and put measures in place to support their positive behaviours. There are clear routines and boundaries in place, and children are encouraged to behave well by receiving both long- and short-term rewards for good behaviour. Children learn that behaving well is beneficial to them and that they will receive positives for good behaviour.

There have been a small number of incidences of children going missing from the home. The manager and staff have responded to this risk by putting in place clear strategies to help prevent children going missing from home and keep them safe from the risk of exploitation. The strategies have been very effective, and episodes of missing from home are minimal.

Staff sometimes intervene with physical restraint to help keep children safe. These incidents are infrequent, and the staff and children are encouraged to debrief after such an incident with the manager. This helps staff and children understand how to prevent future incidents and reduces the need for them to occur.

Children are actively encouraged to build up their independence skills within safe boundaries. They are encouraged to spend time with friends and in their local community. This means that children are equipped with the skills and understanding to manage their own safety effectively and have freedom to spend time with friends. This increases their resilience and prepares them for adult life.

The home has locks on some internal doors. The locking of these internal doors could restrict children's movement around the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There has not been a consistent registered manager in post for some months. An acting manager is in place. This means that there have been some gaps in fulfilling management tasks and the staff team has lacked leadership. A senior manager is new in post, and a new manager has been appointed and will start work in the coming months.

Staff have not received regular formal supervision. Supervision has taken place, but this has been inconsistent. Staff training has not taken place at the frequency that it should and there is no workforce development plan in place. Some policies and procedures have been in place for a long time and are outdated. This means that staff are not supported to offer the best care they can to the children. The senior manager has a plan in place to address these issues.

There is a core of permanent staff who are known to the children and who are committed to offering consistent, nurturing care. Some staff have left, and agency staff have been used. The acting manager has ensured that, when agency staff are used, permanent staff are always on shift with them. This means the children know most of the staff on duty.

Safer recruitment practices are in place, together with an induction programme. These ensure that the staff are safe and prepared to work with the children.

The acting manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses and knows the children and staff well. They can demonstrate that the children are making good progress from their starting points.

External monitoring is good. The independent visitor attends monthly. The visitor provides an account of progress and identifies any shortfalls in the home. The manager acts to address any concerns raised.

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, 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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationship with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to the matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; and regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children are consulted about how their bedrooms are decorated, and have more input into their weekly menu choices and the activities they participate in.	31 January 2022
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	31 January 2022

helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;

ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;

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;

demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and

feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))

In particular, ensure that staff have access to regular supervision and training that relates to the needs of the children in the home and enables them to meet those needs.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that locks on internal doors are removed so that children have access to all shared areas of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

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: SC008484

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brookfield House

Responsible individual: Judith Power

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector

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