

SC013598

Registered provider: Cherry Trees Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered for up to 14 children who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities as well as sensory impairments. The home is owned by a charitable organisation and provides overnight short breaks on a planned basis.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2019.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 13 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/04/2021	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Full	Good
08/10/2018	Full	Good
06/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff have high aspirations for what children can experience and achieve when they visit. They are adventurous and creative in planning activities. This approach helps children to participate in life-enhancing opportunities, build confidence and increase their independence.

The registered manager and staff support parents and carers extremely well. They arrange regular events for them to take part in, such as fly-fishing and pottery classes. Managers arrange these events to help bring parents together and to give them the time to reflect and share their experiences with one another. This approach is widening and strengthening support networks for families, with a drive to promote well-being and reduce isolation for some parents. One parent said, 'Staff support is like an extension of family.'

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the high standard of care and the quality of children's short-stay experiences. This appreciation, combined with high levels of communication by staff, helps parents to enjoy peace of mind when their children stay.

The long-serving, skilled and committed staff team understands the needs and wishes of the children very well. This helps the children to grow in confidence and develop as independent individuals as far as possible. When children secure a target or achieve something new, their key workers celebrate with them, their parents and the staff team. They continue to sensitively challenge children to develop and sharpen their skills, at a pace suited to their needs. As a result, children make excellent progress. One parent confidently spoke about the improvements in her son's ability to wash and dress himself independently since visiting the home.

Children with complex communication difficulties have a voice in this home. Staff are phenomenal in promoting choice for each individual child and in understanding the specific ways in which each child communicates. This helps staff to provide safe and responsive care to children.

Listening to children is intrinsic to the home and their views are central to development planning. Staff have involved the children in choosing beautifully designed murals for their bedrooms and the dining area and children have been able to name communal areas. This helps children to feel integral to the home, and that their views and opinions matter.

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

A skilled leadership team prioritises the welfare and safety of children extremely well.

Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of the children's needs and vulnerabilities. Detailed risk assessments, combined with staff vigilance and awareness, help to ensure that children are kept safe. Clear plans are in place that guide staff, to help minimise risk to children. Carefully assessed staffing levels help children receive appropriate support and supervision while being free to move safely in the home and when enjoying activities in their community.

Staff do not use physical intervention with children often. Staff are skilfully trained in de-escalation and distraction techniques. This promotes the home's ethos of relationship-based practice, and only ever using physical restraint as a last resort to prevent a child or young person from causing extreme damage to property, damage to themselves or to others. This practice, which focuses on positive reinforcement, directly contributes to the positive relationships between staff and children.

Safer recruitment processes are robust. Leaders demonstrate clear commitment and have thorough oversight to ensure the right skilled and experienced staff are recruited to support children. When shortfalls are identified in safe recruitment practices, concerns are highlighted immediately, and suitable measures put in place to mitigate any risk to children.

Staff training focuses on keeping children safe in the context of relevant risks. The completion of mandatory safeguarding training as part of the induction process ensures that staff understand and follow robust safeguarding procedures. The registered manager has recently reviewed the safeguarding policy and completed a short questionnaire with the staff about their learning. This approach means that she can support individual staff with any gaps in their knowledge or understanding of this revised document. All staff spoken with during this inspection had a clear understanding of who they should report safeguarding concerns to.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is hands on and has a vision for excellence. To provide excellent services, she leads by example and demonstrates an unquestionable commitment and passion to providing the highest possible standards of care for children.

The registered manager's development plans and comprehensive internal and external monitoring systems focus on improving progress for children, producing excellent outcomes. Managers know their strengths and the areas to improve on. This is a continually evolving service with a culture for continuous and researched improvements.

Exceptional links with local charities provide funding for equipment and experiences that children and their parents value. The home promotes community links, and children attend local events and festive celebrations. Managers are committed to promoting equality to help children have suitable access to local services and facilities.

Staff benefit from individually tailored induction and development processes that help them to settle into their new roles. Existing team members provide an added layer of guidance and support to new staff. Consequently, this inclusive and welcoming environment results in excellent staff retention. Children benefit greatly from the stability and permanence that this brings.

Managers have responded extremely positively and proactively to the recommendations and requirements made following the last inspection. This has contributed to a wider review of how and where children receive their medication from staff when they visit. Children have subsequently named a room the 'quiet room' and have been involved in choosing soft furnishings and the decor. This means the children feel comfortable and relaxed to receive their regular medication and clinical interventions by staff when they visit.

The overall supervision process for staff is generally very strong, however, inspectors did find an isolated example where a more formal approach to supervision was required. This omission has not directly impacted on the quality of care provided to the children but is a missed opportunity to ensure that all staff records reflect effective formal supervision practices.

On one occasion, recommended actions from an external fire risk assessment were not recorded as being completed, or within the relevant timeframes. This shortfall has not impacted on the safety or welfare of the children; however, it is a missed opportunity for managers and maintenance staff to demonstrate effectively their efforts and diligence in meeting any recommendations from external agencies.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure those responsible for the day-to-day running of the home play a key role in enabling the registered person to monitor and review the quality of care provided in the home effectively. In particular, the registered person must review and, when necessary, action recommendations from external agencies. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52 paragraph 10.2)

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: SC013598

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cherry Trees Limited

Responsible individual: Claire Bryant

Registered manager: Paula Rankin

Inspectors

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector
Tony Waite, Social Care Inspector

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