

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 with a wide range of learning disabilities 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 home provides child-centred, personalised care for 56 children across 53 families. There were six children staying at the short breaks service at the time of this inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2019.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2024

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: 7 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/12/2022	Full	Outstanding
13/04/2021	Full	Good
29/01/2020	Full	Good
08/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The care provided to children is outstanding. Parents hold this service in high esteem because of the excellent care and support that staff provide. The manager and staff understand how essential their support is to local children and families. Parents and external professionals describe them as 'going above and beyond'.

Children look forward to their short-break stay. One parent said that their child 'loves' visiting. They count down the days to their visit and will run into the home excitedly when they arrive.

When children come to stay for the first time, this is meticulously planned. The pace at which children begin overnight stays is led by the child and their needs. Parents receive excellent support during this process, and staff are highly sensitive to the variety of emotions felt by parents when leaving their child for the first time. Staff similarly support children with moving on to adult services when leaving the short-breaks service after many years.

The relationships between the children and staff are excellent. Staff are nurturing, caring, and committed. They know the children well, having formed close and loving relationships with the children over many years. Staff are observant and alert to any perceived changes in children's well-being.

Parents have confidence that their children are receiving excellent care when they come to stay. Children's needs are understood and managed exceptionally well. Some children have complex health needs, and the skills and knowledge of staff help to keep these children safe. There are clear and easily accessible protocols to guide staff in how to support children with health conditions such as epilepsy.

The home is warm and welcoming. It is large, with many resources for children to have fun and explore the world around them. This includes a playroom, cinema lounge, art room, and sensory room. Staff plan children's visits to ensure that they can make the most of their time. Children have the opportunity to try new things and join in activities that reflect their particular likes and interests. Children's achievements are celebrated. Their work, photographs, and certificates are displayed around the home.

Children are treated with respect and their views are consistently sought and valued. Staff are innovative and creative in exploring ways to encourage the children to have their say in the running of the home. One recent addition is a feedback post box in which children are encouraged to post suggestions for things they would like to do, or how to make the service even better.

A member of staff, or the manager, attends reviews of each child's care, which are held by the local authority. The staff contribute to the children's care plans. During their short breaks, the staff help the children to develop, and support them to work towards identified goals. Irrespective of how much time children spend at the short-break service, their lives and skills are enhanced.

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

Staff understand their primary role in keeping the children safe. Staff have an excellent understanding of the children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. All children have detailed care plans and safety assessments. These plans are regularly reviewed by key members of staff and provide essential guides on how to keep children safe. Staff make sure that they re-familiarise themselves with these prior to and during each stay.

Children are provided with bespoke one-to-one care when staying at the home. The staff manage children's complex health needs and medication very well. There are excellent systems in place to safely manage medication storage. Staff are well trained, and the administration of medication to children is scrupulous. Consequently, medication errors are extremely rare.

Staff support the children to manage their behaviours and feelings safely. When incidents occur, these are managed well. Staff use effective de-escalation strategies. As a result, the physical restraint of children is extremely rare. The records made after incidents have occurred are detailed. The manager reviews all incidents to ensure that they understand what is happening for children, and that the use of any physical intervention is proportionate and fair.

Staff work closely with safeguarding professionals, schools, and families. Staff are not only highly committed to supporting the children, but also their families. Parents say that communication between them and the home is excellent. Parents, as well as brothers and sisters, are provided with regular opportunities to meet each other, which is facilitated by staff. Staff share the strategies they use to support the children with families. This helps parents and carers to better support their child within the family home. This dedication to the child's wider network has meant that families are less isolated and children are safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a settled and stable management team. The experienced manager is well established in post. She is supported well by the senior leadership team. She is a confident manager, who is highly committed to the children and their families.

The manager knows the children well. She has high expectations of staff and leads them to provide excellent child-centred care. She ensures that any

vacancies within the staff team do not impact on the experiences of the children during their stay. The manager is proud of the service that she and the staff team provide to local children and their families. She is aware of the strengths of the service and is also receptive to new ideas.

Great care is taken to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff. Pre-employment checks for staff are meticulous.

The manager ensures that staff receive relevant training in various aspects of care. Refresher courses are regularly organised. Staff are consistently well trained for the work that they do. Some staff are trained to a level 4 standard. These staff are therefore able to monitor other staff competences in delivering complex care routines, such as administering medicines via gastrostomy tubes.

Staff say that they 'love' their job. They attribute part of their job satisfaction to being part of a strong and caring team. They feel very well supported. Senior members of staff are highly experienced and thorough in how they manage and support the care staff. Staff receive regular good-quality supervision and annual appraisals to help them to celebrate their achievements and reflect on their further practice development. They describe the manager as being always available to them should they need her.

The entire staff team thinks creatively to offer intuitive and bespoke care to children. The manager and staff are held in high regard by families and external professionals.

The manager is fully involved in developing the service and carries out regular audits. The staff team is imaginative and creative with the resources that they have. The manager and the senior leadership team are committed to reaching out to as many families as possible to enhance their lives. One parent described staff as 'always being there for us'.

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

Inspector

Jane Balfe, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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