

SC020558

Registered provider: Overley Hall Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to 22 children with severe learning disabilities, sensory impairments and autism. At the time of the inspection, 17 children were living at the home.

The home is situated on the same site as a special school. A separate residential home for young adults, registered with the Care Quality Commission, is on the school grounds. The inspectors only inspected the children's social care provision at this site.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025 and is experienced and suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 June 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: 30 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/09/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
31/10/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Good
24/08/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The inspectors spent time with all the children. Children and staff share positive relationships. Staff know the children well, and they are attentive and attuned to children's needs.

Since the last inspection, four children have moved on from the home according to their individual plans. Children's moves are well coordinated. Clear transition plans and social stories help children to understand and process the changes. One child has moved in, and they have settled quickly.

Children's experiences are positive, and they are making steady progress from their starting points. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated. One child has learned to eat meals with a fork and get dressed by themselves. The child's social worker described their overall progress as 'remarkable'.

Staff understand how each child communicates, including through body language, sounds and gestures. They use tools such as pictures and symbols to help children express their feelings and wishes. An independent advocate listens to children and supports them in sharing their views.

The home has five areas known as 'family rooms'. Each communal family room accommodates a small group of children and consists of a lounge and kitchen area for children to relax and eat their meals together at a dining table. The grounds of the home are vast, and play equipment, including swings and trampolines, is accessible to the children. Some children's bedrooms are minimally furnished to meet their needs and risks, while others are highly personalised and reflect the children's personalities. The home is overall well maintained, and plans are in place to address some mould patches.

Education is a priority. All children attend the on-site school and are making progress. Staff work closely with school staff to support learning. Children also participate in forest school and outdoor clubs, which offer creative ways to learn.

Children are healthy or receive support to manage health needs. One child has been encouraged to try new foods and no longer requires their nutrition through a tube known as a PEG feed. Another child is encouraged to be more active, and their love of swimming is promoted to help them achieve a healthy weight. This approach is having a positive impact.

Staff understand the specialist hair care needs of children with Afro-Caribbean hair. A specialist hairdresser provides ongoing support. Children who require them have appropriate combs and hair products, which staff use as part of their daily routines.

Staff help children maintain positive family relationships. This promotes children's identities, and this is of particular importance as some children are a long distance from home. Leaders are working hard to build relationships with parents. A parent reported that while some challenges remain, their child's care is improving.

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

Children are safe in this home. Staff understand their responsibilities to protect children, and they understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities. In addition, the guidance in children's plans helps staff to keep children safe. A child's social worker commented:

'The young person is slowly becoming much more settled in their care with a reduction in incidents. This is due to staff having a good understanding of her needs and how to respond to de-escalate her behaviours when she starts to become unsettled.'

The use of physical intervention has reduced since the last inspection. Leaders are working to understand patterns in children's behaviour, including triggers and themes. Some children are held frequently to keep them safe; such intervention is proportionate and necessary. Following incidents, children are supported to share how they feel. However, staff debriefs lack meaningful reflection, which limits opportunities to improve practice. Recording of incidents and restraint requires further improvement. Plans are in place to address this.

Leaders respond swiftly to safeguarding concerns that may affect children's safety. All concerns, including those raised by children, are taken seriously. Information is shared with external safeguarding partners, and thorough investigations are carried out. This provides a strong safety net for children. However, Ofsted was not notified of one serious incident involving three children. Although no harm occurred, this limits regulatory oversight. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall.

Some children require enhanced monitoring to help keep them safe. Staff use audio and video devices in line with agreed protocols, and children's plans reflect this. This is an area of improved practice.

Arrangements for managing medicines are safer. There have been no recent errors, and record-keeping has improved. A change in supplier has helped organise medicines more effectively. Staff now take medicines to children, rather than asking them to visit the 'surgery', where medicines are stored. This child-centred approach supports children's comfort and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has good oversight of the home and children's experiences. She has been in post for six months. She describes the home as 'being on a journey'. She works tirelessly to drive and embed change, which shows her commitment to wanting the best for children.

Leaders understand the home's strengths, areas for development and ongoing priorities. While many improvements have been made, further time is needed to embed changes in line with the manager's vision.

Staff feel supported and valued, and they hold the manager's leadership in high regard. The manager's influence and approach, combined with high team morale, create a positive environment for children.

A range of management monitoring tools and reviewing systems are in place. They are identifying shortfalls and gaps effectively. Further plans are in place to strengthen systems, which include the implementation of electronic monitoring systems.

Leaders have identified gaps in staff training, including safeguarding and autism awareness. Clear plans are in place to upskill staff. Four members of staff have not achieved childcare qualifications within expected timescales. This is a priority, and individual development plans set out how qualifications will be attained.

Steps have been taken to improve the frequency of staff supervision. A clear structure is in place for line management and supervisory responsibilities. Family room managers routinely review supervision records, which is improving quality and effectiveness. Staff speak positively about their supervision sessions. Regular team meetings provide opportunities to share information and refresh knowledge of procedures. This is a positive area of practice.

Care planning for one child was weak, and there has been miscommunication between leaders, the school and a local authority. This has created confusion, and there has been a lack of professional curiosity and clarity about decision-making responsibilities. This has not affected the child's care, and it is being addressed by the manager. Furthermore, processes are being strengthened to prevent this from happening again.

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 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— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive safeguarding children training, as well as any additional training, to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to meet the individual needs of all the children in accordance with the home's statement of purpose.	29 August 2025
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is—	29 August 2025

in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff caring for the children achieve a relevant qualification within a specified time frame.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the legal status of children is thoroughly explored, considered and understood when making decisions about the children who live at the home, in line with the home’s statement of purpose.	29 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted if they consider an incident relating to the safeguarding or welfare of a child living at the home to be serious. This is in line with Regulation 40 (4). ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording around the use of physical intervention involving children. Furthermore, the manager should ensure that detailed reflection and learning opportunities are provided for staff. ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: SC020558

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Overley Hall Limited

Registered provider address: Overley Hall School, Overley, Telford, Shropshire TF6 5HE

Responsible individual: Catherine Cooil

Registered manager: Rachael Sharpe

Inspectors

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector

Alison Snell, Social Care Inspector

Carl Wilton, Social Care Inspector

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