

SC023636

Registered provider:

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care for up to 10 children. The statement of purpose says that the home is a specialist residential therapeutic community providing therapeutic care and treatment, along with family support, to psychologically traumatised children.

There were 10 children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 7 September 2022.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2024

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 **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 22 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2022	Full	Good
14/03/2022	Full	Good
20/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
14/11/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children speak fondly of the staff and value the relationships that they have with them. They have fun and make friends in the home and in the local community. Staff provide thoughtful and well-informed care to children, which helps the children to feel safe and settled.

There have been no unplanned endings to children's placements. The staff are resilient and skilled in working through challenges in a way that helps the children to feel valued and secure.

Staff work effectively in accordance with the therapeutic ethos of the home. As a result, children learn to express themselves and they make significant progress in developing social skills and learning to share. Some children who were previously thought to be unable to cope in a setting with other children are now thriving and learning to successfully manage group living.

All children are in suitable education placements; they enjoy school and have good levels of attendance. The skills they develop by living as part of a large group have helped them to cope better in classroom settings.

The support provided to individual children, based on an understanding of their past experiences, has been effective in helping each child to make progress. Several children have felt safe enough to disclose past traumatic events for the first time, and staff support children with skill and sensitivity to help them come to terms with past events.

The home has a dedicated placement and family support worker who enables effective working relationships with families. She is active in the professional network and her input ensures that children have clear individual plans to maintain appropriate relationships with their families. Plans may include reconnecting with parents, maintaining relationships with extended families or coming to terms with bereavements and the fact that children are living away from their birth families.

Children access health services as needed and generally lead healthy lifestyles. They have healthy routines, engage in creative and active play, and participate in a range of clubs in the community to follow their interests and hobbies. These include Brownies, swimming, football clubs, drama clubs and youth clubs.

Children eat well and are cared for very well by the cook in the home. She liaises regularly with a dietitian to understand children's individual needs and takes great care to provide healthy, nutritious food that children enjoy. Due to her experience, her training and her position as a long-standing member of staff, she plays a valuable part in the life of the home. She engages well with children and supports

them to understand and be interested in healthy food. Her role makes a significant contribution to the family feel of the home.

Social workers speak positively about the progress that children make and the care that staff provide in the home. One social worker commented, 'This is the best home I have ever worked with.' He said one child had come on in leaps and bounds; they are now in school, no longer at risk in the community and have re-established relationships with their family.

The home very much resembles a family home. It is spacious, clean and well kept. Most rooms are very cosy and homely, and children can personalise their rooms as they wish.

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

Significant safeguarding incidents are rare in this home. When concerns do arise, staff respond effectively to safeguard children, and the registered manager has excellent oversight of safeguarding practice. She ensures that concerns are shared with children's professional networks and takes action to ensure that care practice remains safe and supportive for children. Social workers report that staff communicate well with them and share any incidents of concern promptly.

Due to the age of the children, they are seldom without supervision at the home and are always supervised in the community. As a result, there have been no concerns relating to children being at risk in the community or going missing. Staff have a good insight into the individual vulnerabilities of each child, and they provide suitable levels of care and supervision to safeguard them.

The home has been through an unsettled period. This was partly due to the dynamics of the group of children living in the home and coincided with a number of changes in the staff team. There were some incidents of bullying and of children behaving in ways that were sometimes unkind. The registered manager took effective action to address this. She designed and delivered a series of excellent workshops for the children to help them to understand expected behaviours, the impact of behaving in an unkind way, and how to manage conflicts in a more positive way. Children now work together to earn tokens to put in the 'kindness pig', to put towards group trips. Staff point children to ideas for acts of kindness each day. As a result, the home is calmer, children are being kinder and there are fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Staff also took part in the workshop, and the manager reinforced the culture of everyone being kind and listening to people's feelings.

Despite the excellent practice in promoting positive peer relationships, records of incidents between children are not always clear about the support provided to children who may have been on the receiving end of unkind behaviours.

Staff sometimes use physical intervention to keep children safe. These are usually low level holds for short periods to contain and redirect children when this is

necessary. The manager has excellent oversight of incident records. She routinely undertakes analysis of the use of physical intervention to ensure it is used only when necessary and to consider whether there are other ways of managing behaviour. All staff are trained and skilled in behaviour management techniques and, on the whole, they are able to help children through periods of crisis or conflict without the need to use physical intervention. Often, the children just need a hug, and staff are always on hand to provide one.

The children are of an age where unsupervised access to mobile phones and social media would present a significant risk. As a result, there are tight controls and close monitoring in this area. Staff are aware of the need to balance risk with the need for children to learn to navigate the internet safely and they support children to learn about the dangers. One child, who recently had a successful move to the provider's other home, was supported to access a mobile phone appropriately, in line with her age and vulnerability.

The registered manager and staff take time to understand how children experience care in the home, and the children develop the confidence to speak up and share concerns. All the children spoken to said they had trusted staff they could talk to, and that staff would act on any concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leadership and management of the home are judged outstanding due to the exceptional leadership and management. The registered manager has been highly effective in supporting staff and children through a difficult period and quickly re-established a safe and supportive culture in the home.

She has excellent oversight of the quality of care and is visible and accessible to staff and children. She knows the children well and they have very positive relationships with her. She also has good systems in place to monitor safeguarding practice and ensures that record-keeping is accurate and up to date.

The registered manager is a good role model for staff and has very clear expectations about the standards of care. She is on hand to ensure that care practice is consistent with the therapeutic ethos of the home and that great care is taken to understand how each child's experience may influence how they perceive and respond to situations and interventions.

The registered manager ensures that promoting equality and diversity is central to care practice. Through an awareness that unconscious bias may influence how children from ethnic minority backgrounds are perceived, she was instrumental in reviewing the provider's approach to looking at new referrals to the home. As a result, she has developed the home to be more inclusive and created an environment where there is more diversity in the staff team and in the group of children living in the home.

Staff say they are well supported by the manager. She ensures that staff receive regular supervision and provides a safe space for them to reflect on their work with children and areas for learning and development. All staff are taking suitable qualifications in therapeutic care practice and have opportunities to continue their studies to achieve advanced practitioner level.

The therapeutic model is further embedded in practice through regular reflective group sessions, facilitated by a qualified consultant therapist. This helps staff to explore how their own experiences can influence the way that they perceive the world. This is particularly helpful in supporting staff to deliver care in line with the ethos of the home, which is child-focused, well structured, compassionate and nurturing.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is always recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. This specifically relates to ensuring that incident records capture the experiences, impact and support for all children who may have been affected by incidents. ('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: SC023636

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy, 210
Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX

Responsible individual: Gary Yexley

Registered manager: Olivia Parvin

Inspectors

Lee Kirwin, Social Care Inspector
Chris Warren, Social Care Inspector

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