

SC029950

Registered provider: Somerset County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a local authority. The home is registered for six children and currently provides short breaks to 15 children. Three children enjoyed an overnight short break during the inspection. The home supports children with physical and learning difficulties, sensory impairment and complex health needs.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2013.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 December 2023

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: 17 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/08/2022	Full	Good
20/04/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/05/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy visiting for their short breaks. They enjoy the independence it offers and the time they spend with friends. Children have lots of opportunities for fun and enjoyable activities. When visiting the home they can choose art activities, soft play or use the interactive table. Out of the house they enjoy trips to the park, swimming, or bowling. Staff are attentive and responsive to children's needs, making sure they get the most out of their stay. Staff write to families and social workers with updates after each stay. These letters include details of the activities children enjoy and include photos of them having fun. Over the summer, staff held a celebration day, where children were presented with memory books capturing all their achievements.

Parents and carers speak positively about the support provided for their children. They feel the registered manager is responsive and available to them at any time. They describe the support as flexible and meeting the needs of families. One parent said they know their child is in 'safe hands' when they visit for their short break.

Introductions are well planned and help both children and their families get used to overnight stays. Staff visit children in their homes before facilitating visits to the home. This is built up at a pace that meets the child's needs.

Staff provide children with choices on a day-to-day basis, giving them a say in how they are cared for. For example, a choice of drink, clothes or activity. Managers seek regular feedback from children about the home and seek suggestions about how their next stay can be improved. The registered manager identifies clear actions and makes changes because of the feedback provided by children.

Managers set ambitious targets for children and break these down into manageable steps. Staff focus on these aims in their day-to-day care and help children make progress. However, tracking and oversight of these targets is not timely, and the small achievements made on the way to a bigger target are not always clear. This results in targets remaining static for too long. The registered manager has identified the need to change how targets are supported and recorded and there are plans in place to change this process.

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

A consistent staff team knows children well and provides safety and stability for them. Consultations completed with children show that they feel safe during their stays.

Behaviour is well managed in the home. This is because staff know children well and follow their plans when supporting them. When incidents do occur, they are clearly recorded, with learning identified by managers. There has been no use of restraint.

Managers record safeguarding concerns clearly, and staff remain alert to the possibility of harm. Managers participate in multi-agency meetings to understand risk and the wider support in place for families. The registered manager has implemented new safeguarding audits of children's files to identify potential concerns. This includes scrutiny of various aspects of care provided to understand risk and areas for improved practice. This is not yet fully embedded.

Clear processes are in place to safely transfer medication in and out of the home. There have been two medication errors. These were identified and investigated thoroughly. When errors occur, managers speak to staff about the error, and review their competency.

Regular fire drills take place to help familiarise staff and children with the evacuation process. The registered manager maintains clear records to ensure all children and staff participate. The registered manager risk assesses the location of the home to understand how safe it is for children. While the registered manager includes publicly available information in the location assessment report, there is no record maintained of conversations or consultation with partner agencies, and how that impacts on the understanding of risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced registered manager and core staff team provide an environment for children filled with care and love. The registered manager understands the challenges families face and provides them with support and reassurance. The registered manager works with others in the local authority to understand and develop services for children with disabilities.

Safer recruitment processes are followed when new staff join the home. Staff receive training that is relevant to their role. This includes the 'how does it feel' training where staff are helped to understand some of the lived experiences of children they care for. Supervision takes place regularly and helps staff to reflect on their practice. Staff enjoy working in the home. They say working with the children is the best part of the job.

Professionals praise the home and the support children receive. They say that staff build positive relationships with children and that managers are flexible to support the needs of children and families.

The physical environment is well planned and provides lots of interest and variety for the children. The staff office retains a more formal feel compared to the rest of the home. The building is generally in a good state of repair, however there have been issues with the roof near to a bathroom, leading to some leaks and damage to the ceiling.

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

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.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure the building is maintained in good physical repair to avoid further damage to the bathroom. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should consider how to modify the staff office to make it a more homely and accessible space for children to enjoy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure the consultation they have with other professionals is captured in the location risk assessment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC029950

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY

Responsible individual: Serena Pike

Registered manager: Tammie Rose

Inspector

Clare Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
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