

SC029950

Registered provider: Somerset County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for children and young people who have physical and learning difficulties, sensory impairments and complex health needs.

The home is owned and managed by a local authority.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2013.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 April 2021

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: 29 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/05/2019	Full	Good
22/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children very much enjoy their short-break visits at this happy home. The positive and enthusiastic atmosphere ensures staff members greet children warmly on arrival and provide them with personalised care throughout their stay. Children show their delight at visiting here by coming happily into the home with a big smile on their face and obvious excitement at seeing favoured members of staff. Several parents told the inspector that their child cannot wait to pack their bag for their visit, ask regularly when the next visit is and often enter the home without a backward glance at their family.

Meaningful consultation takes place with children, their families and other stakeholders. Findings from this consultation are used effectively to ensure children's experiences here are positive. For example, children choose what activities they would like to do on their next visit, what food they would like to eat and what new experiences they would like to try. Staff ensure that these choices are included in the children's short-break plans.

Children benefit from a range of opportunities that help them to develop their social, communication and independence skills. Activities are also fun and enable children to try new experiences and explore their individual interests. Staff celebrate children's achievements. They capture children's enjoyment by taking lots of photographs and formally recognise the progress they make by awarding 'magic moment' certificates. These memories of children's visits are sent home with them to share with their families.

Staff have thoughtfully developed the environment into a homely, inviting and purposeful space that meets children's needs well. Downstairs is vibrant and provides children with a wealth of resources, games, toys, sensory activities, musical instruments and space to play. Upstairs, children benefit from the calm décor and personalised rooms that help them to relax and settle for bed. One bedroom door has an unnecessary glass panel in the centre that could impact on children's privacy and does not fit with the otherwise beautifully presented home.

A wealth of positive feedback has been received from children, families and social workers as part of this inspection. When asked what can improve, parents told the inspector that the home and staff need to be copied so that they can provide more visits, move the home closer to family homes and provide care to children throughout their life. The feedback about this service from everyone who contributed is overwhelmingly positive.

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

Children feel safe when visiting this home. This is because of the quality of positive relationships between staff and children, with children's families and with external

professionals. Information about children's needs is shared effectively between these groups and means that good-quality personalised care is provided that helps children to feel secure here.

Staff understand children's needs by spending quality time with them, by consulting meaningfully with them and by observing their presentation. Consequently, staff quickly pick up on the signs that may indicate children feel unwell or distressed and they respond appropriately to help them. Sanctions and restraint are not used because staff act quickly to distract and de-escalate situations to help children to feel less anxious.

Staff take the right actions to keep children safe and risk is managed well. Medication is administered sensitively and in accordance with children's healthcare plans. Effective action has been taken during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that children, staff and visitors to the home are kept safe. Personal protective equipment is used effectively and does not impact unnecessarily on the quality of children's experiences.

Some children need additional support overnight to ensure that their health, safety and personal care needs are met. Consent for using monitoring devices is obtained from parents and, where appropriate, the child themselves. However, a review of the reasons for the continued use of these devices for one child has not taken place recently. Unchecked, this could result in unnecessary monitoring that may impact on the child's privacy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led effectively by an experienced, skilled and competent team of managers. They role model good practice, ensuring that their aim to offer child-centred and flexible care is met in practice. An excellent example of this practice was seen during the early part of the pandemic. Staff adapted the service to provide outreach to help children and families in their own home. This creative approach proved positive at developing relationships, enabling children and families to feel confident to start visiting the home for short breaks.

Leaders, managers and the independent visitor monitor the quality of care effectively. Their helpful evaluation, coupled with regular collation of stakeholder feedback, means that managers know what works well here and what areas they need to develop. In the past year, managers have made improvements to the environment, developed how they consult with children and adapted the service to offer more flexible support during the pandemic.

Staff respond well to the enthusiasm and support they receive from each other, line managers and senior leaders. Consequently, relationships among the team are good; team members check on each other's well-being and ensure that everyone is looked after. Supervision takes place regularly and provides staff with opportunities to talk about their practice and development. The quality of supervision records varies depending on the author. Many records contain a detailed account of the

discussion and support given to staff by their managers. Other records do not contain the same level of detail and often lack documented actions.

Staff receive the training they need to ensure that they can meet children's individual needs. Staff have or are completing the required residential childcare qualification. Specialist and mandatory training are regularly available. Although some of the training has been completed virtually this year, face-to-face workshops have recently started. The manager is looking at ways to ensure that moving forward, team meetings also provide an opportunity for shared discussions and reflective practice, as for much of this year, group meetings have consisted of written responses between staff and managers.

The quality of communication with families, social workers and external agencies is excellent and was commented on positively to the inspector by all stakeholders. At the end of each short break visit, a personalised report is sent to the family and the allocated social worker with details about the child's time in the home. Parents told the inspector that these reports keep them informed and help them to have discussions with their child about their visit.

Effective working relationships are established and maintained with multi-agency teams. Leaders, managers and key workers attend all meetings arranged to review children's needs and progress. The quality of the team's input at these meetings is valued by external professionals and ensures that there is an agreed shared approach to meeting children's needs and to keeping them safe.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that as far as possible the home maintains a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). In particular, remove or permanently cover the glass viewing panel in one of the bedrooms.
- The registered person should ensure that there is a written policy describing how the use of monitoring equipment will support the safeguarding and well-being of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16). In particular, regularly review the use of monitoring devices to ensure that these are appropriate and do not impact on children's privacy.
- The registered person should keep a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4). In particular, ensure that the quality of supervision records is consistently detailed, includes a summary of the discussions held and records the actions agreed.

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(s)

Paula Lahey, Social Care Inspector

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