

SC029950

Registered provider: Somerset 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 19 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 September 2013.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

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: 19 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2023	Full	Good
17/08/2022	Full	Good
20/04/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Nineteen children have regular stays in this home. Three children were seen and spoken to during the inspection. Children enjoy their short breaks and were seen laughing and having fun with staff. Children make exceptional progress because their needs are really prioritised by the staff who care for them. Their outcomes have significantly improved since they began staying here. Children make significant progress from their starting points; they make new friends, and they are encouraged to try new things that they have not done before. One parent said that their child's experience has been life-changing because they are able to communicate better, are much more resilient and they can cope better with any changes that happen.

Children have access to a wide range of experiences during their stays. This widens their experiences and means they can do activities that they would not usually do at home. Children enjoy going for outings to the beach, to the park or for outings into the city. Families are an important part of the children's experiences, and they are regularly invited to be involved in activities together with children and staff.

Children have fun in the home accessing the sensory room or doing crafts. Children enjoy taking part in special events that are arranged for them, such as World Book Day, where staff and children are encouraged to dress up. On Valentine's Day, the dining room was decorated and turned into a restaurant for the children. Staff said that the children really enjoyed this experience. There are bespoke plans in place for activities so children can do things that they enjoy, but they are also encouraged to try new experiences and to develop new skills. Children are encouraged to be involved in their local community and have fun going for walks with staff or picking up litter. A sponsored walk is planned for all the children and staff to be involved in.

Children make exceptional progress and their stays here contribute to this, and they respond well to the routines and boundaries that are in place for them. They are encouraged to eat healthy home-cooked meals during their stays, and to make progress with their independence skills. Children are given choices about the food they would like to eat or the activities that they would like to do.

Children benefit from having a strong, consistent staff team who have specialist skills. Staff have a good understanding of the children's emotional and physical care needs. They can interpret children's communication and behaviour, so they know how children are feeling. Staff recognise when children may be feeling unhappy or unwell and respond accordingly. This ensures that children receive the very best levels of care from staff who know them well. One parent said that their child's key worker has such a strong relationship with their child that they know their child just as well as they do, and that this is simply amazing for their child.

The home is welcoming, clean and comfortable. There are comfortable sofas in the lounge to sit on, and a spacious dining room so children can enjoy meals with staff. There are a variety of social spaces for children to have fun in, including a sensory room and a large garden for them to play in. Children enjoy playing on the bucket swing, or riding bikes and go-karts in the playground.

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

Safeguarding is managed exceptionally well in this home. There has only been one safeguarding incident since the last inspection, and this did not relate to any practice in the home. Staff are well supported to develop strong skills and knowledge, so they know how to manage any concerns that arise. They take strong, decisive action to ensure that children are well cared for. When one child was identified as having unexplained bruising, this was followed up promptly by staff, and appropriate action was taken.

Communication with families, social workers and other professionals is timely and effective in helping to keep children safe and promoting their welfare. There are regular updates provided to parents and professionals after children's stays that highlight the progress that children are making and really celebrate their achievements. If there are any worries identified, prompt action is taken to address them.

When children start to receive their short break, a robust plan is put in place to support children with this. The staff work together with families, social workers and other professionals to plan the needs of each child carefully. There is also careful consideration of the support that children might need to be able to stay together safely. Bespoke plans are developed and this progresses at a pace that is right for each child. One parent said that staff had really listened to their views about the needs of their child, and how to support them. This level of support ensures that there is a smooth start to each child's stay.

There is excellent practice around prescription medication in this home. Daily checks take place, and this helps to ensure that any medication is given appropriately. When one error was identified regarding a child's supplement not being given, this was quickly identified and followed up immediately with the child's parents. This meant that appropriate steps could be quickly put in place to address this.

Physical restraints have not been used in this home, and there have not been any episodes of children going missing. There have not been any concerns about staff practice. When children are experiencing challenges with managing their emotions, strong levels of support are available to help them with this. This helps children to calm more quickly and helps to prevent their behaviour from escalating.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is highly skilled and knowledgeable. She is ambitious for children and has strong aspirations for them. The manager is influential in changing the lives of the

children in this home and has strong expectations of her staff. She has strong relationships with the children and is regularly involved in their day-to-day care. This was evident in the way that she approached the children as they arrived home from the park and in the children's responses to her. The manager and the staff really want to make the experience for each child truly enjoyable, so they want to come back again.

Staff said that they feel highly valued and well supported by their managers. They really love working in this home. They spoke positively about the training that is provided and said that there are opportunities there for them to make progress and to develop. Staff said that they find their managers are very approachable and are responsive; they communicate very well with them. Staff are provided with regular opportunities to meet and discuss how to improve care and practice through regular team meetings, supervision and appraisals.

Leaders and managers have strong oversight of the arrangements in this home. They understand what is working well and any areas that need further development. There are good levels of management oversight in children's records that ensures any information about each child is being recorded clearly. The manager has developed clear strategies to support staff around the management of safeguarding and has accessed specialist training for staff around children's sensory processing needs. Strong action has been taken by the manager to further develop this practice in the home, by providing resources for children to use and ensuring that this practice is implemented.

The manager is influential in changing practice, not just in this home, but also within the wider organisation. The manager is involved in supporting other managers and provides training and resources to other organisations. The manager leads by example and generates creative ideas to sustain the highest quality of care for children.

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: Somerset Council

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

Responsible individual: Serena Pike

Registered manager: Tammie Rose

Inspector

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector

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