

# SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 7 children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, 7 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 30 October 2025.

### Inspection dates: 21 and 22 April 2026

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>requires improvement to be good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
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|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 29 April 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 29/04/2025      | Full            | Good                            |
| 03/12/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 28/06/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 27/03/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Summary of findings

The inspection found that, while children benefit from committed staff and make individual progress, the home overall requires improvement to be good. Inconsistent management oversight has led to poor-quality incident recordings in some instances, unclear accounts of challenging events on some occasions and repeated medication errors, meaning that children have not always been kept safe. Safeguarding procedures are in place but are not consistently implemented, and significant incidents are not consistently reported to Ofsted. Despite these weaknesses, children experience positive relationships, good education and health support and opportunities to develop life skills. Leaders acknowledge the ongoing shortfalls, some of which were raised at the last inspection and are restated

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Children receive care from a committed and stable team of staff who know them well. However, shortcomings in safeguarding practice and weaknesses in leadership and management oversight affect children's overall experiences.

Internal monitoring systems are in place but are not consistently effective. As a result, leaders do not always have a clear oversight of incidents, trends or patterns, or the impact these have on children's experiences. For example, some incident records lack sufficient detail, making it unclear how events were experienced by the child or how staff responses supported the child's emotional wellbeing.

Despite these shortfalls, children make progress. Staff support children developing their communication and emotional understanding. For example, one child has begun to verbalise their needs more effectively, while another child's negative behaviour has reduced, enabling improved relationships and a better understanding of their individual needs.

Staff build positive and trusting relationships with parents, who generally speak positively about both the care provided and the quality of communication from the home. Staff also work effectively with a range of professionals. Regular multi-agency meetings ensure that children's plans are reviewed and adjusted, supporting ongoing progress.

A consistent staff team provides stability for children. Staff understand children's emotional and psychological needs and generally manage their health needs well. There are strong working relationships with education providers, ensuring that children receive appropriate educational support.

When children require additional emotional support, staff advocate effectively on their behalf. For example, a commemorative space has been created in the garden to help a child process grief and loss.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are valued. An independent advocate visits weekly, and the introduction of two social workers has further strengthened the promotion of children's voices. Children are supported in making age-appropriate choices about their lives.

Staff promote independence in line with children's abilities. One child has been successfully supported to transition to adult services. Children also benefit from a range of social and recreational activities, including football, holiday clubs, walks, and trips to local parks and the seafront, supporting their social development and wellbeing.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Risk assessments are in place for each child and are reviewed regularly to reflect their changing needs. Staff understand the importance of managing risk and keeping children safe. However, a significant number of medication errors have occurred, which means children have not consistently been protected from harm.

Leaders and managers have reviewed the medication errors and developed an action plan to improve practice. However, the actions are not embedded, and improvements are not consistently evident.

During the previous inspection, concerns were identified regarding the notification of significant events. There has been limited improvement since then. Not all significant incidents are notified to Ofsted in a timely manner, which delays appropriate external oversight and monitoring.

Safeguarding procedures are in place but are not always implemented effectively. This weakens the overall safeguarding framework and compromises children's safety and welfare.

Children do not go missing from the home. There is a clear and well-understood missing-from-care protocol, which outlines action staff should take if a child goes missing.

Staff receive regular training relevant to the needs of the children in their care. This includes behaviour management, understanding children's behaviour, ligature awareness and medication management. However, this training is not always consistently reflected in practice.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

There are ongoing shortfalls in leaders' and managers' oversight of staff practice. These weaknesses affect the quality and consistency of the care provided to children.

Staff receive supervision, appraisals and training and speak positively about this support. However, learning from supervision and training is not reliably translated into practice. For example, some incident records are inaccurate or lack detail, limiting effective internal and external oversight. In one case, a notification contained incorrect information relating to a medication error.

Leaders and managers understand the factors that contribute to positive outcomes for children, and children's plans are clear. However, the plans are not always followed in practice, which can result in misunderstandings of children's behaviour and needs.

Leaders and managers recognise the service's strengths and areas for improvement, and they have begun to address them. However, some previously identified issues remain, particularly regarding the quality of staff recording.

The manager and staff are proud of children's achievements and actively celebrate their progress. Equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted effectively. Staff respect each child's individuality and work closely with families to ensure that children's cultural, religious and identity needs are met.

## 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     |
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| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(b))</p> <p>Aspects of this requirement were raised at the last inspection and are restated.</p> | 30 June 2026 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 30 June 2026 |

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| <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure the quality of recording incidents and ensure that staff have the skills to write clear, concise records. Additionally, ensure that the manager has oversight of the recordings.</p> <p>This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.</p> |              |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them;</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and</p> <p>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>          | 30 June 2026 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 30 June 2026 |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 30 June 2026 |

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that each child's relevant plans are followed.  
(Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(c))

## 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:** SC031410

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** East Sussex County Council

**Registered provider address:** County Hall St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex  
BN7 1UE

**Responsible individual:** Fiona Lewis

**Registered manager:** Emma Quicke

## Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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