

SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Assurance 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 date: 27 May 2026

Date of last inspection: 21 April 2026

Judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We identified the following serious and widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection:

- Repeated medication errors that put children at risk of harm
- Poor recording of medication errors
- Poor protection of privacy and dignity relating to personal care

Summary of findings

The inspection took place due to a continuing increase in the number of medication errors, which had already been identified as a shortfall at the previous inspection in April 2026. The inspector found serious concerns, including repeated medication errors, poor recording practices and breaches of children's privacy during personal care. Although children generally receive warm, nurturing support and enjoy positive relationships with staff, safety is compromised by ineffective medication management and inconsistent staff practice. Leaders and managers work well with external professionals but have not ensured improvements to practice since the previous inspection, and oversight remains weak.

At the full inspection on 21 and 22 April 2026, the home was judged as requiring improvement to be good. Five requirements were issued, with a completion date of 30 June 2026. As none of these requirements had been met at the time of this assurance inspection in May 2026, they have been restated. One additional requirement and a compliance notice have now also been issued.

Overall, the day-to-day care provided to children is warm and nurturing. Children benefit from long-standing, trusting relationships with staff, and the inspector observed positive, playful interactions. Staff know the children well and meet their social, emotional and educational needs effectively. Children are supported to maintain family relationships, both in the home and in the community. Some children spend planned time at home with their families and then return to the service.

Children enjoy regular activities, including visits to parks and the seafront. Staff work collaboratively with a range of professionals to promote children's progress. All children access education suited to their needs, and staff support their learning and development.

Staff assist children with personal care. However, one child experienced a significant breach of privacy when another child entered their personal care space. The one-to-one supervision in place for the child who entered was ineffective, allowing them to access the area unsupervised. Leaders have introduced a new procedure to prevent recurrence, but it is not yet embedded or tested.

Children's views are valued. A weekly visit from the independent advocate and the monthly visits from the independent visitor provide additional opportunities for children to express their wishes. Staff help children make age-appropriate choices about their daily lives.

Children are not consistently kept safe from harm. Despite an action plan implemented before the previous inspection, staff have made further medication errors. These errors have placed some children at risk. Medication records are poorly completed, with gaps and omissions. As a result, the management and administration of medication remain a significant concern.

Children do not go missing from the home. A clear missing-from-care protocol is in place and understood by staff.

Staff receive training relevant to children's needs, including behaviour management, understanding behaviour, ligature awareness and medication administration. However, the impact of this training is not consistently evident in practice. Staff manage one child's specific behaviours effectively and understand the need to protect children from physical harm. They also recognise the risks posed to another child if they access the internet unsupervised.

Leaders and managers understand the importance of partnership working and maintain positive relationships with professionals. A social worker reported that staff go above and beyond expectations and advocate strongly for children. Incidents are shared promptly with social workers.

Leaders value internal and external monitoring and use this to support children's progress. However, staff do not always act on learning from monitoring, as shown by the ongoing medication errors. Leaders and managers have not provided effective support to the registered manager, and there has not been sufficient oversight of safeguarding practice to ensure that the necessary improvements following the last inspection have been implemented.

Leaders respond to complaints and concerns, including issues raised by the independent visitor regarding practice. Staffing levels are sufficient, and staff are suitably trained and experienced. However, they do not always apply their skills to safeguard children or prevent avoidable risks, particularly in relation to medication.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/04/2026	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/04/2025	Full	Good
03/12/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
28/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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
* The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them; 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 a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	26 July 2026
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	26 July 2026

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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)) Aspects of this requirement were raised at the last inspection and are restated.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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)) 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. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	26 July 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.	26 July 2026

(Regulation 40 (4)(e)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and 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)) This requirement was raised at the last inspection and is restated.	26 July 2026
The registered person must ensure that – the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 21 (1)(a)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that children receive personal care safely and without interruption from other children.	26 July 2026

*This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC031410

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: East Sussex County Council, 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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