

SC031410

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides care for up to seven children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since December 2018.

There were six children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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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: 27 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/03/2022	Full	Good
22/01/2020	Full	Good
18/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Overall, children receive positive care from staff who know them well. However, the home is currently staffed by a mix of permanent and temporary staff. Consequently, children are occasionally looked after by staff who are unfamiliar to them. This lack of relationship and knowledge of children's individual needs has led to children's behaviour not being managed consistently. Staff miss small but important parts of children's routines, which can have a significant impact on their daily experiences.

Children have a variety of complex health needs, and staff demonstrate a good knowledge of these. However, health plans contain limited information about what actions should be taken. For example, there is not always clear guidance and information for staff in relation to supporting children with intimate care tasks.

Children make effective progress in their education and enjoy going to school. All children have individual and clear education plans and benefit from consistent expectations around going to school.

Children's progress in other areas is difficult to establish. While children have had an increase in activities and have learned new skills, leaders' tracking of this is not always effective.

Children's views are well understood through meetings and the effective use of advocates to make sure that their needs are understood and that they have a voice. Meetings with the children cover topics including how they want the garden to be designed, education about the sun and celebration of the King's Coronation.

Children have a large range of day-to-day activities that they choose. These activities include trips to the theatre, going to the local farm, attending local play parks and watching films. Children have access to a large playground area in the garden that is designed so that all children can access it.

Since the last inspection, there have been some changes to the overall environment, with bedrooms being redecorated and the creation of a new lounge. However, there is some planned work that still needs to be finished, primarily to the bathrooms.

Parents and social workers talk positively about the experiences that they have with communication from staff and how well they are kept up to date and consulted with regarding emerging concerns. One parent was clear that staff are doing a good job in providing his child with clear and consistent boundaries and that this was helping both his child and his family to maintain a positive relationship.

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

Risks in the home are well identified. When new behaviours are demonstrated, there has been a robust response in terms of both updating guidance and training for staff.

Overall, behaviour management is effective. However, this is not always the case when non-permanent staff work with the children. There have been occasions when incidents have happened due to a lack of knowledge of what individual children need. There has also been an incident where a child became distressed due to him being unable to listen to staff that he did not know. Consequently, his dignity was not able to be maintained until he was with people who made him feel safe.

Sometimes, incidents involving restraint involve temporary staff, some of whom are trained in a different technique. However, the registered manager has worked well to ensure that she and her staff understand the differences and make sure that when restraint occurs, it is safely managed.

All staff, both permanent and temporary, are debriefed following incidents, and the child is always given the opportunity to communicate how they feel. Records of body maps for children show that any issue, no matter how small, is recognised, reported and responded to.

Allegations are responded to effectively. Leaders take immediate action to ensure the safety of children and immediately report allegations to relevant safeguarding professionals. There is detailed oversight of any concerns raised, and all actions are completed within the timescales agreed with social workers and safeguarding professionals.

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

Leaders and managers have clear aspirations of what they want to achieve for both the home and the children. There has been significant change since the last inspection, and the registered manager has been clear with staff about what is expected and what is deemed as good practice. This has had some positive impact. However, a high level of staff absence has led to shortfalls in the consistency of care that children receive.

Permanent staff receive a wide range of training. When children's behaviour changes, there is a good response to ensure that staff are equipped to look after them. Although there is a detailed training matrix in place, this does not include all the individual training that has been done. Consequently, it is unclear whether staff are adequately trained in all areas, for example in meeting children's complex health needs. It was confirmed during the inspection that staff have continued to receive suitable training. However, the manager has no formal system to assure themselves of this.

Staff are confident about the support that leaders provide and feel that they are always available if any concerns are raised.

There are regular team meetings that help leaders to be able to deliver messages and expectations. Meetings are a good mix of direction, support and praise. Staff receive regular supervision to help to continue the development of their practice. However, records are limited. They do not always show ongoing work or support, and actions are not always followed up.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— treat each child with dignity and respect; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)(c)(i))	30 August 2023
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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;	30 August 2023

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d)(e)(f)) In particular, in relation to monitoring, ensure that the progress that children make is well understood by staff and leaders.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(c)) In particular, ensure that children’s individual health plans remain updated and are clear about how staff should respond to their health needs.	30 August 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan that can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. ('Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: Kathy Marriott

Registered manager: Charlotte De Retuerto

Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector
Stephen Challis, Social Care Inspector

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