

SC031698

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home for short breaks. It provides care and accommodation for up to eight children who have severe learning difficulties and who may also have physical disabilities. The home's statement of purpose states that the age range of the children is between seven and 19 years old.

The registered manager has been in post since 2016.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 October 2019

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: 22 August 2018

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
22/08/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/08/2017	Full	Good
01/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/10/2016	Full	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, 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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. Regulation 32 (1)(4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b) Specifically, ensure that agency staff are qualified to level three within the required timeframe.	27/12/2019

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children delight in using this service and enjoy trusted relationships with staff who are well known to them. Observations during the inspection saw children laughing and smiling as staff engaged them in a wide range of play and fun activities. Staff encourage

the children to make progress. Although staff can interpret children's needs well, they encourage them to use their communication aids to empower them to communicate in the wider world. Consequently, the children are making progress with their communication.

Improvements to the home environment have enhanced the areas where children can relax and have fun. The addition of an art room, a sensory room and a second computer room has had a positive impact on the children. They can now use separate spaces that suit their sensory needs.

Difference is celebrated. Each month a cultural project gives the children an opportunity to learn about customs and celebrations from across the world. Staff capture some lovely photos of the cultural meals and celebrations at the home to give the children lasting memories of their time there.

Children experience well-planned moves from the home. There are good examples of children being supported to make choices about potential new placements. For example, staff helped one child to think through the pros and cons of two places he had visited. As a result, he was able to select the one best suited to his needs.

Much of the home has been refurbished and redecorated, giving it a bright and homely feel. Routine servicing of health and safety equipment further ensures that the environment is safe.

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

Safeguarding is a priority. Staff are well-trained and know what to report, to whom and when. Transparent communication with social workers, and the local authority designated officer, further underpins the safeguarding culture and promotes children's safety.

Communication systems have been improved. Accountability for communicating between the staff and families is clear. This specifically relates to health concerns which are mapped and shared in communication books. As a result, children's safety is promoted.

Adaptations have been made to improve the safety of the premises. The garden fence has been made higher following an occasion when a child chose to climb on it. The team is responsive and adapts risk management strategies to keep the children safe.

Relationships with the wider professional networks are positive. The staff gratefully receive advice and guidance from the positive behaviour support team. Their collaborative working has been successful in supporting the children's complex needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has had a period of extended absence. However, since her return in March 2019, she has reviewed the systems at the home. She has good managerial oversight. Her reflective approach uses lessons learned to inform practice and make improvements to the service.

The registered manager is clear about her expectations. When staff practice requires attention, she takes action. Performance plans and retraining provide staff with support and guidance to improve their practice. Staff feel well supported. They speak positively about the registered manager and feel that the systems and records she has

implemented have given clarity to the care that they are delivering.

Successful recruitment practices have established a core staff team that is suitably qualified. However, agency staff who do not have the required level three qualification continue to be used.

Maintenance has improved. Senior leaders and managers have monthly oversight of all requests, which has increased the timely completion of tasks. As a result, the home is now well maintained.

The registered manager has plans to expand the service to more families. The opportunity has arisen due to several children becoming adults and moving on. The service is valued by families. One parent said, 'I can relax when my child is at [the home] as I know they are taking good care of him.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC031698

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: 175b Priory Road, Hastings, Sussex TN34 3JD

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Rugg

Registered manager: Shirin White

Inspector

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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