

SC034241

Registered provider: Kisimul Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This residential special school is also registered as a children's home because children have overnight stays for more than 295 days per year. The home provides care for up to 28 children with severe learning difficulties. Care is provided to children across three houses on the school and children's home site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision.

At the time of this inspection, 14 children were living at the home. Their views were considered during the inspection.

The home does not currently have a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 May 2025

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 April 2024

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
16/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
17/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, six children have left the home and three have moved in. The manager makes certain that when children move into the home, or leave it, moves are well planned to ensure that they are smooth and effective. This involves working closely with families, social workers and other external professionals. Children's involvement is specific to their individual needs and understanding. Therefore, children are supported throughout this period of change.

Staff have high aspirations for children. They support children to develop age-appropriate life skills that prepare them for adulthood. Staff understand the nature and extent of children's learning disabilities. This enables staff to set realistic, but also challenging, goals for each child.

Children, including those who communicate non-verbally, are supported to express their views and actively take part in decisions about their day-to-day living arrangements. They are helped to use the most appropriate communication methods to make their views, wishes and feelings known. Key workers help children celebrate their culture, interests and achievements. However, records of these sessions are variable in quality and frequency. This is a missed opportunity to capture meaningful conversations with children.

Children are supported to build strong, trusting relationships that form the foundation of their emotional well-being and development. The nurturing bonds between staff and children contribute to children having a sense of worth. For example, in one of the houses, the cleaner helps children to choose the scent of the cleaning products used in their room each day.

Local authority plans for four children are out of date. Despite the efforts of the manager to escalate concerns, there is no up-to-date care plan. As a result, the manager has not been able to ensure that the local authority plans inform the children's plans in the home. This is a barrier to good care planning.

Children are encouraged and supported to attend education, with staff maintaining strong links with the school and advocating for each child's educational needs. Where children are not able to attend school, staff provide structured support within the home to promote individual learning. The home recognises the importance of education and ensures that it remains a key focus of each child's daily plan.

The staff proactively promote each child's health needs. Children are supported to attend medical, dental and optical appointments and there is evidence of good liaison with external health professionals. Staff monitor health outcomes effectively and respond promptly to emerging concerns.

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

Individual risk assessments and support plans are sufficiently detailed. These provide clear guidance to staff, ensuring they understand how to support and care for each child. Links are made between previous worries or behaviours of concern and potential triggers to more-difficult behaviour. The vulnerabilities of the children are well understood by staff.

Managers respond to any allegations against staff in accordance with guidance. Records of investigations show a thorough approach to managing concerns. Managers work with safeguarding partners to ensure that all allegations are shared and that investigations have been carried out, which has allowed for conclusions to be drawn and learning to be identified.

Physical interventions are used to manage incidents where children pose a risk of significant harm to themselves or others. Debrief discussions are held with the staff and child involved. However, some records do not detail how incidents have resulted in floor holds being used. Serious incident reviews now take place to explore incidents of this nature and to gain a deeper understanding of the children's risks and needs.

There is improved safeguarding practice, skills and knowledge in the staff team. The previous shortfalls have been addressed and staff now have a clear understanding of children's plans. All staff have completed safeguarding training and were able to talk with confidence and knowledge about the procedures and the action they would take in a range of scenarios. This has promoted a safeguarding culture in the home that supports the children to become increasingly safe.

The environment of the homes has seen significant improvement, creating a more welcoming, safe and nurturing space for children. Recent improvements include fresh decor, comfortable furnishings and personalised touches that reflect the children's interests and promote a sense of inclusion. Children's bedrooms have been personalised to reflect their individual tastes and preferences, helping to create a sense of belonging. However, in one home, there have been delays in responding to a maintenance need. A plan has been implemented to address this.

The home has an up-to-date locality risk assessment. However, this assessment does not include consultation with stakeholders and relevant agencies. This does not capture local knowledge of the environment.

Complaints are well managed, demonstrating a thorough, transparent and child-centred approach. Concerns are acknowledged promptly, investigated objectively and documented clearly, ensuring all parties are kept informed throughout the process. This ensures that outcomes are communicated and actions are taken to prevent recurrence and to improve relationships between all parties.

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

Leaders have not been able to ensure that there is consistent and stable management of the setting. The current manager has been in post for eight months and has brought a more organised approach to the management of this home. This has created a calmer and more reflective environment. However, the manager has handed their notice in and intends to leave the setting. There has not been a registered manager for the setting since September 2024. This increases uncertainty for staff and for children in their care.

Staff complete in-depth, bespoke training which is tailored to the needs of the children. Staff can readily describe how the training has positively influenced their practice. They can adapt their practice to meet the individual needs of the children. This supports the individualised care provided.

Monitoring systems have improved since the last inspection. A new management structure provides greater opportunity for oversight and monitoring of each of the three homes. The leadership team uses both internal and external monitoring systems alongside children's views to inform service development.

The induction process for new staff is comprehensive and thorough. Staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities that support them in meeting the needs of the children in their care. Staff say that the training they have received on autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and learning disabilities has greatly enhanced their understanding of the behaviours children may display. This has supported staff to adopt a more therapeutic approach when responding to children.

The manager understands the importance of consistency for children. Recruiting and retaining a skilled and experienced workforce has been a priority for the leadership team. Staff retention has improved under the recent leadership and the use of agency staff has reduced. As a result, children are supported by a familiar face and increased continuity.

Staff supervisions are of a variable standard and are not yet in line with the organisation's policy. Currently, they lack depth, with minimal evidence of reflective practice. Records are brief and do not adequately capture the views of staff, suggesting that these sessions are viewed as procedural rather than meaningful opportunities for development. This limits the effectiveness of staff's learning and restricts opportunities for improvement.

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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))	9 June 2025
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2)) This specifically relates to detailing in records the holds used.	9 June 2025
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to—	9 June 2025

manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(ii)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that the children's care plans are accurate and up to date.	
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring that maintenance works are completed in a timely manner.	9 June 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This specifically relates to managers ensuring staff receive regular and reflective supervision.	9 June 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through life-story work and other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered person should ensure that they consult with relevant professionals when they conduct the annual review of the premises. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 15.1)

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: SC034241

Provision sub-type: Residential special school/Children's Home

Registered provider: Kisimul Group Limited

Registered provider address: The Old Vicarage, High Street, Swinderby, Lincoln LN6 9LU

Responsible individual: Adam Henderson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector
Linda Mason, Social Care Inspector
Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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