

SC034495

Registered provider: Hull City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a local authority. It provides care for up to eight children with learning disabilities. At the time of inspection, three children were living in the home.

There is a registered manager at the home. She registered with Ofsted on the 17 April 2024.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 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: 20 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
07/02/2023	Full	Good
01/03/2022	Full	Good
13/11/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have lived at the home for years. Staff know the children very well and have helped them to develop a sense of belonging. Consequently, children have trusting relationships with staff. If children have a preference of who they would like to help or care for them, where possible, this is supported.

The care provided is good and staff have a detailed knowledge of the children's needs, health conditions and support needed through medication. Staff provide what the children need seamlessly throughout the day and night. This is important as all the children have complex needs and rely on the staff to be responsive.

The staff understand the individual ways that children communicate. This includes individual noises, nuances, facial expressions and gestures. This enables children make choices in their day-to-day lives, such as activities they want to do, what food to eat or which clothes to wear. Picture symbols are also used to help with choices or to explain routines. For one child, this reduced their anxiety by knowing the plan for the day. For another, it helped to prepare them for a stay in hospital.

Staff respect the dignity of the children, particularly with their personal care. They ensure that children understand what they are doing when they undertake tasks, even when the child is asleep. Staff achieve this by talking to the children and explaining what they are doing. Nothing happens unexpectedly, reassuring the child during their routines.

Children go to school every day. They have a learning programme that supports their specific needs. For some children, their programme is more sensory based. Going to school every day includes children in learning and socialising, helping them to develop and progress as much as possible despite their developmental delay and learning disability.

Staff maintain positive relationships with children's families even when going through the most challenging times. Children's families are treated with respect and children are helped to stay connected with those who are most important to them. One child is reported to 'light up' when they see their mother. Their mother expressed her happiness for the care and attention her child has. She describes staff and the home as a second family.

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

Staff help children with their feelings and behaviour. They remain curious about why children might be angry or upset. Through following children's individual support plans, staff remain consistent, effectively helping children when they feel upset or distressed. For one child, this helped to lessen their anxiety.

Children's complex health needs are very well understood by the team. This is essential for the children as some have life limiting conditions. Staff have the knowledge and skills to respond in any given situation. They know the children's cues to understand when they are in pain or unwell, so children have the support or medical attention required immediately. Staff are enthusiastic about ensuring that the children live as fulfilling lives as possible.

There have been three medication errors since the last inspection. The manager has taken appropriate action each time, including by making changes to the policy and processes. Where needed, staff have support through extra learning to help prevent further errors in the future. The manager has also created hospital passports for the children. This ensures that health professionals know the children's medication and treatment plans in an emergency.

When serious issues were raised about staff conduct, the manager acted. This included an investigation to establish what had happened. Where necessary, the manager follows disciplinary procedures, including dismissal. This ensures that children are safe in the home.

The manager takes allegations seriously. When a child complained about staff conduct, the manager responded. She assessed what had happened and shared information with the relevant safeguarding teams. Joint decision-making ensured that the child is safe and protected in the home.

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

There are issues with care planning for two of the children. A move to a new home is planned for the children as the current home is closing. Despite the local authority knowing this for more than two years, their long-term plans remain undetermined. The management and leadership team has not resolved this, causing delay in the long-term care planning for the children.

One child does not have a suitable pathway plan. This has prevented the child from having a plan to support their progression into adulthood. Although a plan became available during inspection, this was not suitable and did not include measurable, achievable goals to help the child. This child has experienced further delay as they have not had a capacity assessment yet. They remain on a waiting list. This is essential to determine their decision-making capabilities. Although the management and leadership team has escalated the issues, this was not robust enough and did not resolve anything for this child.

Staffing within the home has been an issue. There are enough permanent staff to care for two children. However, at times, four children have been cared for in the home. This led to significant use of casual and agency staff last year. This has had some impact for the children, who missed a planned holiday due to insufficient staffing. The investigation for one medication error highlighted that not enough gastro trained staff were on shift at that time. This error was avoidable. Staffing issues have eased since early this year.

However, the team remains overstretched by unexpected pressures, such as extra appointments or children being off school.

The manager is enthusiastic about what she does. She knows the strengths and the challenges for the home. She aspires for the children to have the care they deserve so their needs are met to a high standard. She is supportive of her team, ensuring that practice is reflective and that any issues are dealt with.

The staff team is cohesive and welcoming to those who are new. Staff feel very well supported by the manager, who is visible in the home and likes to join in with the children. Staff say that senior workers and the manager welcome challenge as 'that's how we learn'. This creates an open culture where views can be shared. Support systems, such as supervisions, team meetings and training, happen frequently. Close links with various health professionals ensure that staff know how to use medication, feeding and occupational health equipment to meet the children's complex needs.

Professionals report positive relationships and excellent communication with staff. For example, communication between the home and school helps teachers to understand the children's presentation better. Professionals can see the progress that the children make at the home. Specialist health professionals who provide advice and training to staff say that the team are eager to learn, so that they can support the children in the best way possible.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(b)(iii))	22 May 2025
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. (Regulation (13)(1)(a)(b) (2)(d))	22 May 2025
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each	22 May 2025

child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation (5)(c))	
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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: SC034495

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Kingston upon Hull City Council, The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull HU1 2AA

Responsible individual: Michael Boddy

Registered manager: Charlene Martin

Inspectors

Miriam Dolman, Social Care Inspector
Kirstie Sutherland, Social Care Inspector

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