

SC035518

Registered provider: Sea Shell Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to 28 children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities or learning disabilities. Children live in seven houses on a site that includes a school and college. One house provides care for children who have short breaks. Most children attend the on-site school.

The registered manager has been in post since 2018.

Inspection dates: 7 to 8 August 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/11/2017	Full	Good
24/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must 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). In particular, that there is consistency in the quality of supervision provided.
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4). In particular, individual children's records should not contain information about other children.
- The registered person's review of the quality of care provided by the home should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 5, paragraph 15.4). In particular, the review should include consultation with staff so that their opinions can be used to further improve the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children at the home experience many positive outcomes and opportunities. Staff provide high-quality and individualised care. This helps children make significant progress in learning communication and independence skills. Parents gave many examples of the difference that staff have made to their child's happiness, including improved emotional well-being and enriched family contact. One parent said, 'They [female residential staff] provide mothering to my son that I can't give because I'm his dad. He loves them. I made the right decision to send him there.'

Staff see each child as having unique needs for support. They promote equality of opportunity rather than seeing barriers to development. This means that children try new experiences that help them to take part in their local and wider community.

The children have very good relationships with the staff, who know them well. Staff have improved the way they help children to develop communication skills. Children learn to use tools such as signs, symbols, objects of reference or electronic aids. They use them to choose the activities they want to attend, the food they eat, and how they relax. One parent said, '[X] hasn't been here long, but he has changed so much. Our family has noticed how he has grown up, become so independent, and wants to tell us things.' Staff work hard to help children to get the best possible outcomes during their stay. They consult regularly with families and adopt family routines where possible so that children experience consistent care.

Children interacted well with the inspector by using communication aids to express their views. They were enthusiastic about their experiences. They told or showed the inspector about swimming and going to the zoo. They asked staff to take them out for a ride on their bike or a walk. They organised turn-taking games with staff and the inspector. They appeared to be relaxed and were happy with the holiday activity programme that they had helped staff to put together.

During the inspection, older young people were getting ready to move to their adult placements. Staff worked in partnership with their new carers to make sure that young people understood what was happening. Young people have visited their new homes and local area so that it is familiar to them. Staff thoughtfully arranged introductions so that young people could get to know new people and build a relationship with them. This practice helps young people to overcome anxiety about moving on. It builds their confidence and enriches their lives. It helps young people to plan for their futures.

Staff capture children's aspirations in person-centred planning. Newly overhauled care plans set out clearly what children like, and what they ask to do. Keyworkers create opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the world through direct work sessions. The subjects are wide ranging and reflect children's unique needs and interests. Some children are learning to shop and cook, others are helped to understand how to stay safe by recognising what parts of their body are private. This individualised approach helps children to make progress in the areas that are important to them, as

well as those that are set out in their education and health care plans.

Residential staff contribute to multidisciplinary discussions and programmes about children. This means that children experience consistent support that meets their needs as staff carefully assess their starting points. Staff support their development and respond to any difficulties. Staff work collaboratively with other professionals and parents to identify strategies to support communication, sensory and physical comfort, healthcare and emotional regulation. Children recover well from any setbacks because staff take time to understand their changing needs.

Most children attend the on-site school or college. There is effective communication between all departments. Staff use a shared plan of care with positive results. The residential staff keep photographic and diary accounts of children's experiences. This helps parents to understand how and where their child has progressed, as well as celebrating children's success.

Staff care about children's cultural and religious heritage and celebrate special events such as birthdays or family occasions. Much to his family's delight, one child was able to attend their Eid festivities. He joined in with everyone for a family meal and sharing of gifts. It was made possible because of the progress he has made in listening and understanding. Staff had used this progress to prepare him for the festivities by making a card and setting out what would happen. Photographs captured the joy of the occasion.

Children access the healthcare they need to stay fit and well. Many have complex health and developmental needs. Staff know how to promote their health and well-being. Clear emergency procedures are in place for those who need them. Staff support children and their families at health appointments. This ensures that essential and important information is shared with health professionals.

One house is dedicated to accommodating children who have short breaks. A new manager for the house has worked with staff to improve the environment so that it better meets the needs of children who stay there. Children benefit from greater opportunities to use a wide range of communication tools, access more community-based activities, and develop independence skills. Well-matched groups of children mean that they enjoy their short break with friends who like to share the same experiences.

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

Children stay in spacious houses that are safe and welcoming. High staffing ratios mean that there is always someone on hand to promote children's safety. The staff help the children to become safer as they develop independence in moving around the home and the safely enclosed site. Staff use clear, multidisciplinary risk assessments and support plans. They identify how children's individual understanding, communication and behaviours affect their ability to cope with difficulty.

Children respond well to individualised positive behaviour support programmes. They take part in activities that promote their sense of security and well-being. Staff provide support when children become upset and their behaviour becomes unsafe. Staff record all incidents that involve physical intervention. Managers carefully review and analyse these reports, and use staff debriefs to improve practice. Children's well-being is carefully monitored when their behaviour becomes unsettled. Staff understand the link between communication and behaviour, and the impact of poor health on a child's ability to cope. This means that children receive the right level of help at the right time.

Staff support strategies are in place, to help children to learn about themselves and their emotions. This improves their ability to help themselves. Managers carefully analyse and identify possible triggers for behaviour. They make changes to young people's support plans as required. Young people use personalised strategies to help them to feel better. This includes going for a walk or bike ride, retreat to the sensory room that is available in each house or use of 'countdown' to a change in activity. Verbal and brief physical re-direction is the main response to unsafe behaviour. Restraint is used when all other support systems have been ineffective. This protects children's human rights and enhances their dignity and safety.

Senior managers take their responsibility seriously to employ suitable staff. They apply the same standards to the use of agency staff. This means that all staff who care for children have been rigorously vetted. The home promotes a transparent culture where staff are enabled to raise concerns about each other's practice. All concerns are reported to appropriate external bodies and prompt action is taken to ensure that children receive safe and respectful care. This protects highly vulnerable children from being harmed by unsuitable people.

The safeguarding and management teams meet regularly to share information, review causes for concern, and address any emerging issues. The staff and managers have had refresher training in safeguarding. Parents say that they are confident that their children are safe and happy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been significant changes to the home's leadership team. The registered manager will leave shortly after this inspection. A qualified and experienced temporary manager is already in post and has been working alongside the registered manager. This ensures continuity of oversight of the home. In addition, a temporary head of care services has also been appointed. A re-structure of the residential team has resulted in the appointment of further deputy managers.

This strong team has already created impact by improving the quality of care being provided. It has built on improvements to the systems that monitor and review the residential provision. This has resulted in actions to address all the requirements made at the last inspection. Inspectors saw considerable improvement in the quality of record keeping, children's health management and staff supervision. Managers are now regularly present in each of the houses that make up the children's home. This means

that they can observe staff practice and get to know children. They coach and mentor staff. They understand the impact and effectiveness of children's individual plans. Their leadership recognises and celebrates the considerable efforts that staff make to improve children's lives.

It is early days. Some children's records contain information about other children. Staff recruitment and retention is an ongoing problem. The leadership team is proactive in addressing staff and parental concerns about providing children with consistent and competent staff. Staff morale and performance is being addressed through improved communication, training and coaching opportunities, and greater celebration of staff efforts. Managers have not gathered formal feedback from staff about the improvements made. Such information would enhance the new residential development plan.

Professional supervision sessions take place regularly. They have improved in staff reflection about children and recognising the impact of any training. Not all supervision records reflect this progress. Attendance at staff meetings has improved because managers have included staff development and discussion as well as operational review. Staff training needs arising from children's unique needs are clearly identified and addressed.

Managers and staff have good working relationships with the young people's families and other professionals. The managers and staff challenge other professionals when they need to. They help ensure that young people get the services and support that they need. A parent said, '[The residential staff] are there for me and support me when [X] has a medical appointment. Nothing is too much bother for them.'

The organisation's philosophy of 'children first' helps to encourage managers and staff to have high aspirations for all. The responsible individual for the home acts as a link between the board of the charity and the operational management team. This has helped the trustees to review and improve the home's structures and systems. Improvements to the houses where children live have enhanced their daily experiences. External consultants have provided additional quality assurance audits to help drive change and improvement. The monthly visits and reports from the independent visitor have been revised. They now provide a greater insight into the conduct of the home while continuing to capture individual children's experiences and progress.

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: SC035518

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Sea Shell Trust Limited

Responsible individual: Jolanta McCall

Registered manager: Lisa McCloskey

Inspectors

Denise Jolly, social care inspector

Kamal Bhamra, social care inspector

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