

SC037281

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to seven children aged between eight and 17. The children may have experienced neglect and/or emotional abuse or had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable. The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in August 2008.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 April 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: 3 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

This children's home was judged as inadequate at the full inspection in October 2018. One compliance notice was issued in relation to the use of physical interventions. A monitoring visit in November 2018 found that the compliance notice was met, and a new full inspection judgement of requires improvement to be good was made.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2018	Full	Inadequate
21/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/09/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children make lasting relationships with the staff, who provide calm and consistent support as a good parent would. Two children have left the home since the last inspection. Their moves have been planned carefully, with time for the children to prepare for the change. The staff seek information about children who have left and maintain contact with them when possible.

The children all attend school. This gives a structure and a routine to the week. The staff encourage the children to read, use construction toys and enjoy creative outdoor experiences. The children appear enthusiastic and show an interest in new experiences. Sustained school attendance has improved the children's aspirations, their day-to-day experiences and their self-confidence. Attending school enables the children to make friends outside the home. Consequently, children enjoy play dates and attend birthday parties.

The children enjoy a varied range of sports and clubs. The staff provide exciting activities in the school holidays and at the weekends. Forward planning and a good knowledge of the local attractions mean that the children are busy and purposefully engaged. These experiences help the children to build positive childhood memories.

The children receive positive rewards for attending school and keeping their bedrooms tidy. Consequences for unwanted behaviour are well considered to ensure that they are meaningful and effective. This helps the children to learn from their mistakes.

The home blends nicely into a pleasant, residential area of the town and is close to local amenities. The rear garden provides ample outdoor play space and a wide range of play equipment including a new zip wire. These resources encourage the children to play outside and benefit from fresh air and exercise.

Areas of the large home require refurbishment. The hallway has an institutional feel because of the two large noticeboards and stained carpet tiles. Bedrooms vary in the standard of decor. The communal colour schemes have not been given enough consideration. This detracts from what is otherwise a spacious and homely period property.

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

There have been a significant number of physical interventions in the last year. The last inspection identified some of these as unsafe. Following staff receiving training and bespoke guidance, there has been significant improvement in the use of physical intervention. These interventions are mainly used to protect the other children and reduce the number of injuries to the staff. The children are young and there are times when they are unable manage their emotions. The staff make comprehensive records of

these incidents and look beyond the incident to find an alternative approach. Increasing the use of sensory resources, offering a cuddle and providing more positive reinforcement are all methods that help to reduce the number of physical interventions used.

Allegations against the staff are managed in accordance with the home's safeguarding procedures. Referrals to the designated officer, police and social workers ensure a multi-agency approach to any safeguarding concerns. Working together with external professionals ensures that investigations are fair and transparent. This approach protects the children and the staff.

The staff ensure that the predictable risks to the children are detailed in risk and behaviour management plans. These plans include recent incidents and guide the staff on managing potential incidents. However, the risk assessment of the premises fails to include the outdoor play equipment and the external fire escape. This is despite the introduction of new play equipment and an incident in which a child accessed the fire escape. Although immediate steps were taken to make the fire escape safe, it has not been assessed by the manager to highlight the potential risks. These aspects of the premises pose a potential risk to the children.

There are tensions between the children, and some bullying behaviours have occurred. These behaviours increased when two children targeted another child. One child has since left the home. Despite this, a child continues to be bullied. The social worker has expressed concerns about this. The staff have worked to address the bullying, with some success. The staff meet with the children and provide opportunities for them to have positive experiences together and time away from the home individually. However, two related incidents are recorded poorly. One record captures half of the incident and is not accurate and another fails to identify bullying. Therefore, the records fail to present a true picture, which makes bullying difficult to monitor.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager, who is a qualified social worker, has been registered to manage the home since August 2008. She is supported well by the senior staff at the home and the head of residential services.

The staff team is established and long-serving. This provides consistency and stability for the children. The staff are positive about their roles and the support that they receive from the management team. The team always supports the staff following incidents and injuries. The regularity of staff supervision has improved. The supervision records capture practice issues and discussions about the staff's well-being.

The management team has a very good awareness of the children's current progress and the challenges that the children face. A good awareness of the children's needs has resulted in increased staffing and extra support for the management team. This targeted support has started to reduce the number of incidents at the home.

Good consideration and scrutiny are given to the suitability and sustainability of the

current placements. A high level of support from the head of service has been welcomed by the senior staff team. This support has provided better oversight and evaluative monitoring of the children and the difficult dynamics between them.

The external monitoring visitor has not obtained the views of the children's parents and carers or relevant professionals at the last three visits. Failure to seek the views of others means that the reports may not be balanced or objective and reduces the extra safeguard that these monitoring visits are intended to provide.

The manager has not recorded a complaint made by a social worker as a complaint. This was identified during the inspection after speaking with the social worker. Failure to recognise and record a complaint reduces the transparency of the quality of relationships with the children's professionals.

The staff regularly seek the children's views. Listening to their ideas and using these to make changes at the home strengthens the children's relationships with the staff. Weekend breakfast get-togethers provide a relaxed forum for any issues to be discussed over a cooked breakfast. As a result, the children are actively involved in resolving the communal living issues.

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 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 particularly refers to making a safety assessment of the garden play equipment and external fire escape.	26/04/2019
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children.	26/04/2019

The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. The registered person must supply to HMCI, at HMCI's request, a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken in response to each complaint. (Regulation 39 (1)(3)(5))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a))	31/05/2019

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Staff should understand what they must do to prevent bullying of children by other children or adults. Staff should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse such as peer abuse, cyber-bullying and bullying in day-to-day relationships at the home. Registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.16)

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: SC037281

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Registered provider address: Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Clifford James

Registered manager: Serena Emberley

Inspector

Deirdra Keating, social care inspector

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