

SC037282

Registered provider: Kent County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short break care for children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and associated complex needs. The maximum number of children who can stay at the home at any one time is 7. There were 4 children staying at the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2022.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 May 2026

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: 12 January 2026

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
12/01/2026	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/02/2025	Full	Good
06/02/2024	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children benefit from consistent, nurturing care delivered by a committed staff team, enabling them to flourish during short breaks. Leaders have made significant changes since the last inspection with a focus on improving the consistency of care for children. Children enjoy a wide range of enriching activities and are supported to develop independence through tailored opportunities and specialist equipment. Their views are valued and inform practice. Safeguarding is effective, with robust risk management, rare interventions and clear procedures. Staff feel supported, and monitoring systems provide increased challenge, ensuring safe, high-quality care.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who access short breaks are cared for by a staff team that has prioritised consistent care since the last inspection. As a result, children are flourishing and benefit from positive, nurturing experiences during their stays away from home.

Comprehensive admission meetings take place at the start of each child's stay, so staff have up-to-date information about children's needs and a clear understanding of their care and health requirements. Any changes that need to be made to care plans are done so immediately and shared with the rest of the team.

Staff work closely with parents to make sure that care, boundaries and expectations are consistent with those experienced at home. Parents speak highly of this approach and feel confident and reassured when leaving their children in the care of staff.

Children receive an enriching experience when they come to stay. There is a wide range of activities and specialist equipment available to them. Alongside this, there are regular trips to the local beach, shopping or local soft play centres.

Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate and development-based steps to learn new skills. This can range from being supported to reduce the need for personal care or helping themselves to eat, to preparing food. Specialist equipment, such as height adjustable cookers and kitchen work tops, ensure that these opportunities are accessible to everyone.

Children's views are taken seriously. Staff use creative ways to gather feedback, including children's meetings and day-to-day conversations, while always using a child's preferred method of communication. Staff ensure that children know how their views have influenced decisions. This helps children to feel valued and understand that their opinions matter.

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

Staff have focused on ensuring that their care is consistent, and this includes how children are kept safe. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are comprehensive and include detailed understanding of how best to support children in different situations. Children are confident, showing they feel safe with the people who are looking after them.

Physical interventions are rare, with only one occurring since the last inspection. This was done to keep the child safe from a situation where he was potentially at risk. Leaders have recognised the importance of giving children the opportunity to communicate how they feel following incidents and have introduced methods to support children to do this, no matter how they choose to communicate.

Children do not go missing. A combination of knowledgeable staff and a safe environment ensures that children do not go missing. Staff are well informed of what to do and are clear of their responsibilities should a child go missing.

Concerns about staff practice are taken seriously. Leaders immediately report concerns to external safeguarding professionals and always take any actions recommended. Internal investigations are thorough and further show the diligence of leaders to ensure practice is suitable and children are safe. However, on one occasion, a practice issue was not reported to leaders, and this was picked up through the manager's oversight. Leaders took immediate action and provided guidance to staff. However, staff should feel confident in recognising and reporting care that is not to the expected high standard.

Staff have access to specialist equipment to support the complex needs of children. This equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is in full working order and there are clear instructions and training available to all staff to know how best to use it. On one occasion, a piece of equipment was used incorrectly. This was addressed and learning was shared with the wider team to avoid a repeat of this mistake.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a permanent, suitably experienced and qualified registered manager, who has delivered a robust response to the shortfalls of the previous inspection. Leaders have continued to evaluate their response to the last inspection, and with the use of review and action plans have met all requirements that were set.

Leaders have focused on the importance of ensuring consistently high standards of care for children and have used opportunities such as training, team meetings, observation and reviewed guidance to ensure this level of care has been achieved.

Staff receive regular supervision. This includes child-focused discussion and identifies any practice issues or training needs with appropriate action plans if required. Alongside this, staff receive regular and purposeful training. Since the last inspection, the manager

has placed a focus on development and upskilling staff and has used a recent training week to ensure that all staff are trained in key communication methods.

Staff have welcomed the changes made by leaders and the focus on working positively together. Staff value the support from all leaders and know they do not have to wait for supervision as the manager has an open-door policy.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. However, comments from parents that could be seen as grumbles are taken seriously and treated with the same significance. The manager always ensures that there is good feedback to parents when any concerns are raised.

Independent monitoring takes place through monthly visits. There has been a significant increase in scrutiny and challenge through visits that have provided assurance to leaders on the impact of their changes.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

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: SC037282

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kent County Council

Registered provider address: Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Road, Maidstone ME14 1XQ

Responsible individual: Tanya Hartness

Registered manager: Alice Scott

Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care inspector
Lee Muchmore, Social Care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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