

SC040175

Registered provider: The Drive Care Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to eight children with learning disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, seven children were living at the home. One young person has remained in the home since reaching the age of 18.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2023	Full	Outstanding
13/12/2022	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
12/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children make extensive individual progress because of the excellent support that they receive from staff.

The children have complex health and communication needs. Staff help children to express their views, wishes and feelings in creative ways. The manager and staff understand each child's communication needs. They adapt their communication styles to enable effective interactions to take place. The staff's use of social stories and alternative communication aids supports children to have their voices heard and helps them to better understand their complex health diagnoses.

Staff encourage the children to engage in a wide variety of activities in their local community. Staff have supported one child to volunteer in a local shop. This supports their confidence, self-esteem and development of their social and independence skills.

The home celebrates difference. The children live in a culturally diverse home and each child's individual needs are responded to and promoted positively. The children are supported to celebrate their heritage and cultural beliefs. Staff help them to attend religious services in accordance with their beliefs. Children learn about diverse cultures and religions from staff and one another. Some children living in the home are siblings. While staff recognise this, they also see them as individuals and help the children to develop a sense of self.

Staff build positive relationships with the children. Children enjoy staff's company and seek them out for comfort and reassurance. Staff use humour and distraction in tricky situations. This has resulted in a decrease in negative behaviours.

Staff changes are rare. Children experience consistency and stability from the caring staff. Staff are thoughtful about the planning for children moving into and out of the home. These plans are comprehensive and child centred. This means that children who move into or out of the home are well prepared and quickly settle.

Professionals are highly complimentary of staff's individualised child-centred practice. One social worker described how the children are 'unrecognisable' from the children who moved in. They spoke about increased communication skills and said that the children are happy and settled.

The staff go the extra mile to support and encourage the children to maintain relationships with those who are important to them. One professional said that a child is now able stay with their family because of the excellent support of the staff. Family time is thoughtfully planned, and the same staff take children to see their families each time. This helps staff to build close relationships with families. This approach allows children to

remain part of family celebrations, such as Christmas. One child's family said that this has made a huge difference.

Staff ensure that children's health needs are very well met and advocate to ensure that children have full access to local health services. For example, the manager met with the local doctor's surgery to discuss the children's needs. As a result, the surgery made changes to the environment and now provides a quiet area for the children to wait in. This reduces the children's anxiety. One social worker said that one child no longer requires medication to manage their behaviours because of the work staff have carried out to develop the child's communication skills.

The staff have high expectations for the children and support them to achieve their full potential. All children are in education and have high levels of attendance. The manager has worked closely in collaboration with teachers and has provided school staff opportunities to spend time in the home. This has supported school staff to develop strategies and skills to manage and reduce children's behaviours.

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

Safeguarding incidents are rare and there have been no complaints. Children do not go missing from home. When safeguarding issues occur, these are well managed, and staff quickly ensure that the children are kept safe. External professionals are appropriately informed and consulted. Clear records of any concerns and actions taken are maintained.

Staff know the children well and support them to manage their emotions and behaviours. They are alert to things that cause the children distress and use de-escalation strategies well. As a result, there has been no need to use physical intervention techniques.

Children say that they feel safe. The staff encourage them to speak to their social workers and other professionals about any worries or concerns. Staff ensure that the children have access to advocacy services.

Staff understand the additional vulnerabilities of the children. They respond to any presenting risks quickly. Staff support the children to access and navigate the online world safely.

Staff know the children well. However, some plans lack clear guidance for staff in how best to manage situations when children become distressed and overwhelmed. While this has had no actual impact on children, there is the potential for inconsistent staff responses to children who are in distress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is aspirational for the staff and the children. They share these aspirations well with their staff team and positively lead the service. The manager is visible,

approachable and supportive. Staff say that he actively promotes their personal and professional development. Staff retention is excellent, which means that children are looked after by adults who know them well.

Staff describe 'committed and inspiring' leadership from the manager. Staff have regular high-quality reflective supervision, which supports them in their role. This encourages development of their practice, which in turn improves the service. Staff have reflection built into forums such as the well-attended regular team meetings. Staff feel listened to and valued. One staff member said, 'I am sincerely proud to be a part of this home and the dedicated team.'

The manager promotes a reflective learning culture across the team. Training is wide-ranging and responsive to the needs of the children. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and skills to care for the children well. One staff member said, 'The support from our management team has been instrumental in ensuring that we provide the best possible care for the children.'

The manager has positive working relationships with partner professionals. Other professionals describe the staff as 'child focused', 'thoughtful' and 'kind'. One social worker said that nothing is ever too much trouble for the staff.

The manager maintains excellent oversight of the service and has a thorough understanding of each child's progress. He is aware of the home's strengths and areas for development and is continuously looking at innovative ways to improve. The manager advocates with external professionals to ensure that children have access to the services and support that they need. This has supported positive outcomes for children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied by staff and kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

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: SC040175

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Drive Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: The Drive Care Homes Ltd, 18 Hatherley Road, Sidcup
DA14 4BG

Responsible individual: Emmanuel Akpan

Registered manager: Ram Poudyal

Inspectors

Cassie Martin, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Claudia Poienar, Social Care Inspector

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