

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, eight children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2017.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 October 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2025	Full	Outstanding
17/10/2023	Full	Outstanding
13/12/2022	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children living in this home have a range of complex health and communication needs. Staff understand these needs well.

The manager's focus is on providing long-term care, and that children living at the home experience stability. When children move into or out of the home, their plans are well thought out, and they are supported to understand these moves. However, when children do move into the home, the impact on the children currently living there is not always fully considered.

Children's health needs are understood and subsequently well managed, and children are supported to attend all necessary medical appointments. Some children who previously had restrictive diets have begun to try new foods.

The home is culturally diverse, and this is reflected in part by the staff team. However, the manager has not fully explored the culture and identity needs of several of the children in the home, whose ethnicity is not represented by staff, and which may impact on the ability of staff to meet all of the children's associated needs.

Children are supported to attend their chosen places of worship, and they are provided with opportunities to observe religious practices, access culturally appropriate foods and celebrate faith-based events in line with their beliefs.

Children are kept busy and have access to a range of activities, both in the home and in the wider community. Some children have recently begun to attend regular clubs.

The manager and staff use a range of communication aids to support their relationships with the children. However, these are not always used consistently, which impacts on children being able to fully have a voice.

The home has adapted its children's guide into an alternative communication format to suit most children living there. However, the children's guide has not been fully adapted to ensure that it is accessible to all children.

The home environment is maintained, and children's bedrooms have been personalised. However, some areas of the home could benefit from redecoration and renovation to ensure that it remains homely.

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

Children's behaviours are well managed and incidents in this home are rare. Staff are skilled in de-escalation and distraction techniques. As a result, there have been no incidents that required the use of physical intervention.

Safeguarding incidents in this home are infrequent. There have been no allegations made. However, when incidents do occur, information is shared appropriately with external agencies and the regulator. The manager demonstrates a commitment to learning from incidents to improve practice.

Children do not go missing from this home.

Health and safety aspects of the home are kept up to date and regular checks are carried out to ensure that the environment remains safe and compliant.

Safer recruitment practices are robust and records are well maintained, helping to reduce the risk of children being cared for by unsuitable adults. However, the home employs many staff, and there have been several changes to the workforce. Over half of the staff team are not on permanent contracts, which has the potential to impact negatively on the stability and consistency of the care provided to the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has good relationships with the children and knows them well. Professionals who spoke to the inspector were positive about the care provided, reporting that children living in the home are making progress and that communication and information-sharing are effective.

Staff feel well supported and report that the manager is available and accessible to them when needed. Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. Staff feel that their views are listened to and valued in these forums.

The manager is aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. They regularly complete monitoring and reviews across different areas of the home. These practices support their understanding and oversight. However, findings do not always progress to clear actions or outcomes.

The manager has clear aspirations for the home and a well-defined vision for the ethos and culture that they are building. However, this has been impacted at times by changes within the staff team. Many new staff have been recruited, meaning that the team is not yet established.

The manager's oversight of staff supervision has not been fully effective. Although staff receive supervision, opportunities to reflect on learning and development are limited, and there are shortfalls in the recording and monitoring of actions identified during these sessions. Not all staff have received an appraisal, which means that further opportunities to review performance have been missed. Staff supervision records were also accessed by an individual without appropriate authorisation, breaching confidentiality.

Staff have access to a broad range of training opportunities. However, the management of this has been weak. Records show that staff completed a high number of online training courses in a single day, but there was no evidence of follow-up to review learning or assess retention. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of training and whether it is contributing meaningfully to staff development and practice.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression that fosters a nurturing and supportive environment in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide is age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)
- The registered person should lead a team that provides high-quality care for all children living in the home, maintaining a consistency of care. They should lead this team to enrich the lives of children, considering their cultural and ethnic needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)
- The registered person should have clear processes and timescales for supervision of practice and keep appropriate records for staff in the home, ensuring that these records remain secure to maintain staff confidentiality. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should fully consider the impact that any placement will have on the existing group of children in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: Cyrinus House, 18 Hatherley Road, Sidcup DA14 4BG

Responsible individual: Emmanuel Akpan

Registered manager: Ram Poudyal

Inspector

Cassie Martin, Social Care Inspector

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