

SC040633

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to five children who are experiencing emotional and social difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

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	requires improvement to be 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: 25 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
21/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
24/10/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, five children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and one child has moved out.

Staff provide children with nurturing care. Staff have built trusting relationships with children, and they know them well. Children were observed to be laughing, chatting and reminiscing with staff. One child said that the staff are great, that they listen to him, and he feels able to talk to openly with them. Children feel listened to and understood by staff who really care about them.

Four of the children have education places. One child is working towards their GCSE exams and is proud to be a prefect at school. Another child is working towards entry-level exams. Children have had the opportunity to visit a local university. One child's engagement with education has been sporadic, due to being missing from the home. The manager has found creative alternative education provisions. At the time of the inspection, the child has recently started to re-engage with education. Education is held in high regard by staff and children make good progress.

The manager and staff ensure that children spend time with their families. One child is working towards overnight stays to spend time with their family. Where appropriate, children gradually work towards unsupervised time with their family. Children also benefit from positive relationships with independent visitors. Children spend time with people who are important to them.

Children experience and enjoy different activities and hobbies. These include jiu-jitsu, day trips and swimming. One child participated in a parade ceremony for police cadets that the manager attended. Children spoke fondly about their summer staycation. The children donated blankets to those in need and are encouraged to recycle. Children have enriching experiences and are part of the local community.

Staff are good role models and have helped children to gain independent living skills. Children cook and can make a range of meals. Staff have helped children to use public transport. Staff are developing children's knowledge of their rights and entitlements and how to access a range of services in the community. Building these practical life skills helps to ensure that children are very well prepared for adulthood and equipped for when they leave the home.

The home is large, spacious and well decorated. There are photos of children around the home. Children's bedrooms are personalised. The children have several communal rooms to enjoy. Children benefit from a well-kept and homely environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There has been one significant concern regarding the staff's safeguarding practice. Staff failed to supervise children appropriately, safeguarding procedures were not followed and the children were not supported appropriately. The manager did not notify the local area designated officer (LADO) without delay. Since the incident, social workers have agreed a safety plan with the manager to keep the children safe. The staff have had training from the LADO. One social worker was concerned about how the incident was managed, but now feels reassured that the children are safe.

Staff use positive reinforcement and praise. Children have a good balance of financial rewards, verbal praise and recognition of achievements. Children respond well to the reward systems and feel validated. Consequences have been used minimally to manage behaviours.

The staff occasionally use physical interventions, which are appropriate and proportionate. The manager ensures that the children are spoken to following interventions. The physical intervention is reviewed by the manager and a qualified physical intervention instructor. This close monitoring means that the manager has good oversight.

Despite staff's best efforts to try and prevent missing-from-home incidents, one of the children has had a high number of missing-from-home episodes. The staff manage these incidents well and understand the child's complex pull factors. The manager and staff are working closely with the police to gather intelligence creatively, to try to reduce the frequency of incidents and the child's exposure to risk. The child is always welcomed home and offered an independent return home interview. The manager has regular risk management meetings with relevant professionals and has an agreed risk assessment. Working in a joined-up way helps to minimise risks to the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and qualified. She has managed the home for over 15 years. She is supported by two deputy managers. She is a positive role model to staff. Staff are enthusiastic and caring and provide child-centred care.

Staff have a well-planned induction when they start working at the home. New staff benefit from buddying up with experienced staff. Staff have several shadowing shifts and are supernumerary during this time. Staff have regular supervision, speak highly of managers and feel well supported. Staff are motivated to give children good care and staff morale is high.

The manager is an excellent advocate for children. She advocated for a child to have a planned and gradual move on from the home. The child spoke positively about how the move was being managed.

Staff have good-quality training. Training is both online and face to face. Staff have training from qualified safeguarding professionals and police. Staff either have a level 3 diploma in residential childcare or are working towards the qualification within the agreed time frames. Staff are equipped to understand and manage children's complex needs.

The independent person's reports are of good quality and make appropriate recommendations. These help the service to make improvements to the quality of care that children receive. However, feedback from children, parents and professionals is limited. Opportunities could be missed to ensure that children's well-being is monitored.

There has been a high number of notifications to Ofsted regarding significant incidents. The manager generally ensures that Ofsted is notified promptly. However, on two occasions, the notifications have been delayed. This reduces Ofsted's ability to monitor the home effectively.

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 staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff understand their roles in relation to safeguarding children and act in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies.	23 March 2023

In particular, ensure that staff understand how to support and reassure children appropriately if they make a disclosure. In particular, ensure that the local authority designated officer is notified, without delay, of relevant safeguarding concerns.	
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 (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that regular feedback is sought, and observations of children are carried out, and that professionals' and parents' feedback is regularly included in the reports.	24 April 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that notifiable events are notified without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.14)

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: SC040633

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Sharon Newton

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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