

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 and accommodation for up to five children who are experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in 2007.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

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	outstanding
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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: 21 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
24/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
23/02/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children in this home thrive. A stable staff team provides children with a sense of security and stability and creates a warm and nurturing environment. The high levels of nurturing that children receive impact positively on children's experiences and confidence. Personal gestures, such as children's photographs being displayed in the staff office, affirm to the children that they are valued and cared for.

Children build secure, positive attachments with the staff and children benefit from receiving individualised care. Stable and trusting relationships with staff provide the children with a secure base from which they can explore their feelings, experiences and histories in a safe environment. Children in this home grow in confidence and develop a positive self-view. They develop their skills and maintain respectful and meaningful relationships with each other using staff as role models. For one child, the level of support, encouragement and nurturing has enabled them to develop the confidence to explore and change their identity. This child is happier and healthier as a result.

Staff develop positive, productive relationships with professionals and families. The strength of these relationships supports effective care planning for children. Key workers help children to keep in touch and reconnect with their families. One child has successfully rekindled her relationship with a parent who lives in another country. The child's social worker is very positive about the staff's success in facilitating this significant event.

The staff recognise the importance of providing the children with opportunities for fun and play. Staff ensure that children have access to a range of enriching activities which help them to develop their social skills and resilience, and they are encouraged to participate in a variety of sports and hobbies. Children also support and encourage each other to engage in activities. For example, two children who attend their local swimming pool cheer each other on during individual lessons.

Children attend and succeed in education. Attendance at school is a routine part of daily life in this home. When children find school challenging, staff provide extra support and strong advocacy on their behalf which helps them progress. Staff work closely with individual schools and relevant agencies to ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the children. These relationships support a collaborative approach to reviewing and adapting plans to meet the children's specific educational needs.

Children are supported to raise any concerns they may have. Staff listen to them and act on their wishes and feelings. As a result, children feel valued.

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

Staff ensure that children can access and interact safely with technology, such as internet gaming. Consistent staff practice has successfully supported a reduction in the destructive behaviours displayed by some children. For some children, worrying patterns of behaviour requiring physical restraint have been successfully addressed. The low rates of physical restraint and sanctions demonstrate the effectiveness of the home's restorative approach.

Children thrive and enjoy living at this home. Staff set consistent boundaries which create a positive behavioural climate where success is celebrated and rewarded. Children's key-work sessions are used effectively to support children to successfully manage and develop positive behaviours.

Staff are highly committed to, and put in place, appropriate measures to help children feel safe and secure in the home. They strive to be proactive about potentially negative behaviour. As a group, staff carefully consider what the children are trying to communicate through their behaviour, and then successfully meet that need.

Effective multi-agency working has ensured a co-ordinated approach and planning to help children to consider and reflect on their experiences and emotions. Children have developed positive coping strategies to help them progress and develop. As a result, children are resilient, and their emotional well-being promoted.

Children are helped to explore their individual cultural identity and backgrounds in key-working sessions. One child has been assisted to take part in and enjoy their personal cultural practices during the Christmas period. A number of children proudly display flags from their countries of birth in their bedrooms and are supported by staff to understand and be proud of their heritage.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a highly effective registered manager in post, who is ably supported by a very experienced assistant team manager and two senior practitioners. The leadership team is ambitious for the children in the home to develop their full potential. They set an aspirational culture in which the staff strive for excellence. Staff report that the manager is approachable, supportive, and excellent at motivating the team.

There are clear routines and boundaries in place to help the children to self-regulate their behaviours. The care provided by competent staff assists the children in overcoming adverse early life experiences. The positive culture within the home motivates the children to aspire and progress from their starting points.

Managers stagger their working hours so that they can be available for the children before and after school hours. Managers know the children very well and successfully advocate for them. Senior leaders have excellent relationships with other agencies. Stakeholders have great confidence in the staff's communication and care skills.

Leaders and managers support staff to follow risk assessments and risk management plans. These set out clearly what is required to keep the children safe. Local issues and risks such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation are clear. Partner agencies contribute to the location risk assessment. This information informs staff understanding of risks beyond the home. Consequently, staff are able to provide guidance and advice to help children to manage their own safety when out in the community.

There are excellent monitoring systems in place which ensure that detailed and clear records are kept about the children's experience of living at the home. Managers have addressed requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. They are eager to continuously improve their practice so that children flourish and continue to make progress.

Staff receive regular supervision which enables them to develop their knowledge, practice and reflect on their roles. Staff morale is positive, and they work effectively as a team to deliver excellent care. As well as formal training sessions that are available and attended by staff, managers respond quickly to meet staff development needs. For example, a bespoke training and support programme has been introduced to enhance staff knowledge and skills to effectively support children's individual needs. The strong relationships the manager has developed with external agencies mean that specialist training is readily available and delivered by professionals, such as the child and adolescent mental health services.

Staff are supported to maintain a very high skill set. However, some members of the team have not achieved the recognised level of qualification to work at the home within the required timeframe. The registered manager has taken decisive action to support these members of staff to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support the children effectively whilst completing the qualification. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and ensures that staff complete their mandatory training. The manager has a clear plan to rectify all the identified shortfalls.

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 registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32 (1) (4)(a)(b))	31 August 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.8)

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: Lisa Wade

Registered manager: Sharon Newton

Inspector

Paul Thomas, Social Care Inspector

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