

SC040642

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a local authority and provides care for up to five children. The home provides care for children with social and emotional difficulties. Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2020.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/02/2023	Full	Good
27/04/2021	Full	Outstanding
10/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
21/11/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by committed staff with whom they share positive relationships. Staff spend time to get to know children and to understand the things that are important to them. This has helped to strengthen the relationships between children and staff.

Children make good progress in different areas of their lives that is helped by the support they receive from staff. For example, one child's engagement with education was encouraged by staff and this contributed to them gaining qualifications. Another child, who previously had poor engagement with education, engaged with a tutor during the summer. Children have also begun to form trusting relationships with staff and have been willing to speak about personal matters, such as their mental health. The consistency in staff's approach has influenced positive progress for both children.

Staff work effectively with external professionals and have formed positive relationships with the children's parents. A social care professional said that staff were very understanding and supportive towards a child following their move to the home. Furthermore, the staff continue to work with the child's parent to help the child to settle in the home.

Staff are proactive when supporting children. They creatively seek the children's views in different ways. The staff have acted on the children's preferences regarding activities. Both children recently enjoyed a holiday with staff, during which they got involved in several outdoor activities of their choice. The children are supported with their plans for the day, whether this be staff accompanying them to go shopping or supporting with transport for family time. A child has also been supported with enjoying their own cultural practices. This means that staff ensure that children are provided with positive day-to-day experiences in line with their wishes.

A priority for staff is ensuring that there is ongoing work with the children to enhance their understanding of risks and keeping safe when out in the community. In addition, staff ensure that both children are provided with opportunities to develop their independence skills. For example, the children are encouraged to cook alongside staff, they practise their budgeting skills, and take responsibility for keeping their bedrooms tidy.

Children live in a well-maintained home that is comfortable and welcoming. Their bedrooms are well personalised with photos of children and their family members as well as other personal belongings. A child said that although they would prefer not to be in care, living in the home is good and the staff are nice.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and risks. They are guided by children's plans and ensure that the children receive consistent care. Children's plans are regularly reviewed and are developed with input from involved professionals. This ensures that actions to support the children continue to meet their changing needs.

When children go missing from the home, staff take appropriate action in line with their plans to ensure their safety. Staff ensure that serious concerns for children are shared with the professional network and that risk assessments and safety plans are updated collaboratively. Attempts are made to debrief with the children following incidents. In some instances, this has led to children being supported to understand the potential risks they are exposed to and them reflecting on their behaviours.

Staff are mindful that some behaviours children present are a result of past trauma. Consequently, they are non-blaming in their approach and instead seek to understand the situation from the children's point of view. Staff balance their nurturing approach with instilling appropriate boundaries for children. They have the children's best interest at heart and are strong advocates for them. For example, when a child expressed thoughts of harming themselves, staff worked with health professionals and were instrumental in arrangements made for the child to access therapeutic input. Staff actions contribute to the children becoming increasingly safe.

Staff know children well and are aware of potential triggers for each child. A social care professional reported that staff are well equipped to manage challenging situations and use de-escalation techniques to resolve conflict. The skilled staff adapt their approaches effectively to meet the children's individual needs, which contributes to a feeling of well-being and security for the children.

Children are cared for by staff with whom they share positive relationships. A child said that they would feel comfortable to speak to staff if they were unhappy about any issues. Pre-employment checks in place help to ensure that only suitable applicants are employed to work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager strives to ensure that children's needs are well met, and that risks are well managed. The progress that children make is monitored and staff are supported with influencing further progress. The registered manager has delayed admitting new children to the home. She has shown due consideration to new referrals, alongside the needs of the children in the home. This demonstrates her commitment to ensure that the needs of the children in the home remain a priority.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are well supported and equipped to carry out their role effectively. Staff are supported through reflective group discussions

and individually in supervision sessions. Managers are readily available to offer support to staff when this is needed. Staff reported that they feel well supported by their managers and shared positive experiences of being helped to progress to senior roles.

In fulfilling the aim of providing good-quality care to children, leaders and managers ensure that staff have training relevant to meet the children's needs. This is supplemented by regular input from a forensic psychologist and a child and adolescent mental health services professional. Consequently, staff understanding of the children's complex needs and how best to support them has been enhanced.

The importance of the children's views being actively sought and actioned is reinforced by the registered manager. To support this aim, the manager has implemented different ways in which the children's participation is encouraged. This includes key-work sessions, fortnightly children's meetings, and general conversations outside of these forums. Leaders and managers have influenced a staff team whose members are tactful and seize opportunities to engage with children as they are presented. The children in the home are shown that their views matter, and consequently they feel valued.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. Key areas of focus are staff recruitment and upskilling the current staff team. While managers ensure that staff are well equipped for their roles, the training matrix and supervision log were not up to date. This could lead to training and supervision not being completed when due.

Leaders and managers promote diversity. Staff have open conversations with the children about diversity and equality issues and use this as opportunity to instil positive thinking. A child has been encouraged to celebrate and enjoy their cultural traditions and foods.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records demonstrate that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and that they understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. Records relating to staff supervision should also be kept updated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: SC040642

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: Rebecca Hanifan

Inspector

Sasha Reid, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023