

# SC042147

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private provider. The home uses a therapeutic model to give love and care to up to six children between the ages of 11 and 18 who may have experienced a chaotic early family life, which may have included abuse, emotional neglect and exploitation.

The registered manager is suitably qualified and was registered with Ofsted in April 2019.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 1 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 9 July 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 09/07/2019      | Full            | Good                    |
| 05/06/2018      | Full            | Good                    |
| 07/12/2016      | Full            | Requires improvement    |
| 25/04/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives. This is due to a committed and dedicated group of adults who ensure that children are valued, loved and cared for. This has enabled children to make progress in their relationships with family, improve their education and develop their social and independence skills. For example, one child is in education nearly full time, after a significant period out of school. One social worker told the inspector, '[Child's name] is making progress in all areas of their life - communication, self-esteem, family relationships, and doing really well in school because of the consistency of adults and the way they work with him.'

Children are supported to celebrate their childhood and have made remarkable progress as a result. Through being lovingly supported by adults, children have stepped outside their comfort zone to try new experiences. During their time in the home, two children have learned to swim, one child has learned to ride a bike and another child has been inducted into a local Scout group and made friendships for the first time. Children have also benefited from new experiences such as eating in a restaurant for the first time and becoming a zookeeper for the day. The home's independent visitor described the adults as, 'truly caring about children, and [their] impact on well-being is huge'.

Adults thoughtfully reduced the impact COVID-19 had on children's ability to see their families. As community spaces closed, children welcomed their families to the home and adults supported children to keep in touch. As restrictions have eased, children have preferred to have their families come to their home as they are proud of their space and the people living there. Another child has plans to invite friends over to celebrate an upcoming birthday. One social worker felt that this contributed to one child feeling settled during restrictions and this had a positive impact on the child's mental health.

Children who leave the home are supported sensitively and lovingly. Children do not wish to leave the home but when they are required to, careful planning and good communication with the child and their future placement makes the move seamless. Children will always have a place at the home and are encouraged to return for planned events and celebrations. Their time at the home is fondly remembered through personal diaries, memory boxes and their photo on the staircase. This allows the child to feel valued and a part of something special.

Professionals are incredibly positive about the care their child receives at the home. Adults are described as knowledgeable about children's plans, that their communication is excellent and that they go above and beyond to support the child. This is clear to see throughout the home as children actively seek hugs and reassurance from adults. The adults speak knowledgeably and lovingly about

children and children speak lovingly about the adults who care for them. This has allowed children to safely experience new things and continue to grow.

The model of care in the home has moved away from institutionalised practice. Effort has been made to create a homely space and consideration has been given to the technical language being used in the home to ensure that more child friendly language is used. The results of this have been extremely positive. All aspects of the home are considered, with the children at the forefront of thinking. This has resulted in children and adults sharing more time in each other's company, enjoying household rituals such as daily table tennis or games challenges. All children enjoy these times and fill the house with love and laughter.

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

Children can safely explore their curiosity and develop their understanding. The home has an environment where everyone feels valued and listened to. Informal chats, card games and catch-ups allow children to talk about sensitive topics and receive support and education in a non-discriminatory manner.

Children have very close relationships with adults. The close bond with adults has enabled children to talk through concerns they have. This has led to a marked decrease in episodes of children going missing, restraint, complaints and sanctions, of which there have been none for almost a year.

The home's culture is one of mutual respect; each person in the home respects the next. Children help adults with making dinner, choosing furnishings for the home and doing chores, because they want to. This allows children to develop life skills and a real understanding of community. This stems from the close love and respect everyone has for one another.

Children feel safe both physically and emotionally. Children feel able to raise concerns and prompt responses from adults ensure they feel listened to. Adults will actively seek a response from professionals and will challenge when this is not received.

Adults are sensitive to the needs of children. A deep understanding enables adults to recognise signs that a child is not presenting as their 'normal self'. Adults act early and address concerns, leaving children feeling secure and supported. This has led to children learning to better manage their emotions and learning new coping strategies.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The inspiring leadership team has bravely introduced a new culture in the home. Adults have embraced this through inductions, training and well-coordinated support from their leaders. This commitment is infectious, and the progress made by adults in the home is mirrored by children. The independent visitor told the inspector, 'From

the first visit [name of child] wouldn't speak and was shy. Last week we sat and they were talking, joking and laughing, and this was in the space of the year.'

Adults in the home were keen to heap praise on the care and support given to them by their exceptional leaders. Adults consider themselves part of a family and many refer to their time in the home as not feeling like work. When asked, two new adults in the home were keen to tell the inspector that this was the best job they had ever had, and this encouraged them to give their best to the children in their care.

Adults are encouraged to innovate in their practice and add value to the care children receive. For example, children learn from adults who follow a vegan lifestyle and are encouraged to try new foods. Battery chickens have been rescued and are carefully cared for in the garden. Children are able to use mealtimes as discussion times for a range of topics, to expand their perspective of the world.

The culture of progress and ambition is modelled to children. Adults working at the home have moved to senior roles in the provider's wider service. Adults are keen to learn, and training provided is timely and comprehensive. Adults are deployed to work at the other providers homes in order to enhance their experience of working with children with a wider range of need. This helps them to keep their practice up to date and ensures that they have the range of experience needed to meet the needs of children.

Leaders have excellent oversight of all areas of the home, from children's records, to the maintenance of the building, to adults' recruitment records. This ensures that the quality of children's experiences is extremely high and the care they receive is also of the highest quality.

Leaders ensure that external professionals add value to the care of children. Social workers, schools and other agencies are held to account and encouraged to ensure that children's experience in care is enhanced beyond the home. One child's teacher told the inspector, 'I wish all homes could operate like this.'

## **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:** SC042147

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Child First Limited

**Registered provider address:** Child First Ltd, PO Box 2050, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3XQ

**Responsible individual:** Michelle Wright

**Registered manager:** Matthew Langley

## Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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