

SC042147

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns and operates this home. The home is registered to provide care for up to 6 children with social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 4 children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024.

Staff in the home are referred to as 'adults', and so the same terminology is used in this report.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 May 2026

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/06/2025	Full	Good
16/07/2024	Full	Good
01/08/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children enjoy living in this home. They have good relationships with the adults who care for them. Adults build positive, long-standing relationships with the children, both current and past residents. They work positively to ensure that transitions out of the home are well managed and that children feel well supported throughout. Adults in the home value education and work effectively to ensure that all children are able to access it.

Management oversight is not sufficiently strong. Leaders and managers do not currently have sufficient oversight of the home to be able to fully identify and track the necessary areas for development and improvement.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and say that they like living in the home. They feel that the adults care about them, they feel listened to and know that they can share their worries with adults who will support them.

All children are attending education. The adults have worked diligently to make this possible, and they work closely with schools to support children's education in line with their individual needs. Consequently, children are making progress in this area. As a result of support from the adults and close liaison with education colleagues, one child has returned to education following an extended period of refusal and now has a timetable that is more in line with their individual needs.

Children living in the home have fun and the adults help them to take part in various activities. Children are encouraged to explore their own individual interests, and adults support them to enrol in relevant clubs.

Adults make every effort to ensure that moves out of the home are positive. They build long-standing relationships with children and have strong ongoing connections with many of the children who have moved out of the home. When children do move on, adults advocate for them to ensure that the most appropriate decisions are made regarding their ongoing care. In one case, managers made a difficult decision to refuse to allow a child to return to the home from hospital. While the adults did seek to create a positive transition for this child, opportunities were missed to learn from the child's time in the home. Leaders and managers are not routinely reviewing move-outs and endings to learn and to improve practice.

Healthy eating is not consistently promoted within the home. Children work with adults to create weekly menus. However, they have access to large amounts of unhealthy snacks outside of mealtimes. This is not supporting children to develop healthy eating

habits or helping those who have weight management issues. The home is unkempt in some areas and the floors in the home are not clear from debris. Children's bedrooms are personalised in line with their likes and interests. However, one child's room was exceptionally messy and in need of freshening up, with belongings strewn over the floor.

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

The use of physical intervention in the home is rare, and it is only ever used as a last resort. When physical intervention does occur, it is in the least restrictive way possible and for the least amount of time necessary. Managers speak to the children and the adults after such incidents. Managers and the responsible individual have oversight of all incidents of physical intervention to ensure that they are proportionate.

Significant incidents and allegations in the home are well recorded. Records give clear context and are consistently child-focused. Adults ensure that children's voices are heard, and they act promptly to help the children to feel safe and supported. Management oversight in records is lacking, and it is not clear how lessons learned from incidents and subsequent training opportunities are considered and implemented. On one occasion, a serious concern regarding a child's welfare was not notified to Ofsted.

Adults support children to access mental health and substance misuse services when necessary, and advocate for them to be seen promptly by these services. Adults provide children with the space to reflect, and they ensure that the children know that adults are available to support them.

Missing episodes are managed appropriately. Adults follow clear procedures to ensure that best efforts are made to locate children and to keep in touch with them. Police and social workers are informed promptly. When children return to the home, adults speak with them about their time away and work with the local authority to ensure that return home interviews are undertaken.

Boundaries for children are not clear or consistent. This causes confusion and escalation in behaviours. Adults find it difficult to deescalate incidents of challenging behaviour effectively, with one adult commenting that the approach is more reactive than proactive.

Children are not consistently kept safe online. There are plans to restrict and monitor children's access to the internet. However, this is inconsistent across the children. Some devices do not have any restrictions in place at all. There have been incidents of children engaging with unknown adults online, and it is unclear how this can be monitored or prevented if adequate online safety measures are not in place. Adults are not working alongside parents and children to reinforce the home's expectations around online activity and the use of parental restrictions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers do not ensure that there are comprehensive plans to address children's individual needs. While plans are in place regarding aspects such as weight management and online safety, these are not comprehensive, robust or individual to children's needs. Management oversight on records is limited, and leaders and managers are not ensuring that lessons learned are clear or fully implemented in the home.

The occurrence of incidents is rare. However, when incidents do occur, adults find them complex to manage and incidents can continue for many hours. The registered manager provides limited oversight, which leads to a lack of learning from incidents and prevents adults feeling able to reduce and better manage occurrences in the future.

Managers and leaders are not obtaining feedback effectively. There is little evidence of the home obtaining feedback from parents or professionals. Therefore, external scrutiny is not being used to develop the home.

Regulation 44 visits are taking place monthly. While the reports are positive, they provide little critical analysis or recommendations for improvements to the home. The independent visitor rarely obtains feedback from parents or professionals.

Leaders and managers have no effective programmes in place to measure children's progress. This makes it difficult to ascertain children's development from their starting points and to consider their objectives.

There has been stability in the leadership and management team, enabling the children to feel settled and secure. The registered manager is aware of children's individual needs and works to support them accordingly. The responsible individual is well known to the children and has developed positive relationships with them.

External professionals speak positively about the experience of working with the home. They comment that adults are committed and know the children well, and that the children make progress while living at the home.

Supervision of adults and training is well managed. Adults are highly skilled and can complete their roles adequately. Adults feel well supported by the organisation and report positive relationships with leaders and managers.

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, The 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. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that all children are being kept safe online and that appropriate online safety monitoring measures are in place.	1 July 2026
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(c) (2)(a)(i))	1 July 2026

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that they are obtaining feedback both internally and externally to promote the development of the home.	1 July 2026
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all serious concerns about a child's welfare are notified to Ofsted, as well as other relevant persons. ('Guide to The Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a high level of cleanliness, with general cleaning taking place regularly and children's bedrooms well maintained and free from any hazards. (Guide to The Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)

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: 62 The Street, Rustington, Littlehampton BN16 3NR

Responsible individual: Matthew Langley

Registered manager: Francesca Scotland

Inspector

Sheniz Hudaverdi, Social Care Inspector

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