

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. According to the statement of purpose, the home uses a care model that provides love and care to up to six children between the ages of eight and 18 who may have experienced early childhood trauma. Five children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2024 and is suitably qualified and experienced.

In this report, the staff are referred to as 'adults', as this is the term which is used in the home.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

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

Date of last inspection: 1 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2023	Full	Good
18/01/2023	Full	Good
08/02/2022	Full	Outstanding
09/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children living at this home are able to reflect and to express their views openly. For one child, this has been a notable element of his progress, for which he is commended by adults at the home. The feedback from children is that they feel valued, and they have trust in the adults caring for them. They feel supported by the actions adults take to help them feel safe, manage their frustrations and understand their feelings.

Children's views are considered with sincerity and responded to with genuine interest and care. When children make complaints, they are taken seriously, and adults ensure that responses are timely. Adults respond to children's complaints in a sensitive way, and this helps children to feel that their views are important.

Opportunities for developing independence skills, such as cooking, self-care, budgeting, travel and cleaning are well-harnessed within the home environment both in a planned and spontaneous way. Support with independence is appropriately targeted to children's developmental needs and adults ensure that they offer the right level of encouragement and supervision where needed for children to work on these skills safely.

Educational outcomes are varied. However, Adults liaise with the relevant parties to secure educational provisions for children that meet their needs. Adults also advocate for children where there may be delay or a lack of cohesive planning for children's education. For one child, a change of educational provision has allowed her to progress, and she is building trust with teachers, which means she is accessing a greater amount of lessons than previously. For another child, who is not currently accessing any provision, adults continue to seek support from the relevant authority to secure the help he needs to be ready for the next stage of education or employment.

When children move into and out of the home, this is well planned. Preparations are made to ensure that children receive a warm welcome. For example, one new arrival felt the benefit of another child taking the lead during her welcome visit. Risks are well considered prior to children moving into the home and there is a thorough consideration of how adults can meet children's needs when they do.

Professionals have unanimously commended the communication from the adults at the home and the updates they receive about children's progress. One social worker said that their child was in the "best placement" for them, and another described the work undertaken with a child to build his social circle as being "sensitive and child-centred".

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

Adults at this home are encouraged to be reflective and transparent about their feelings, actions and experiences, which contributes towards a positive safeguarding culture within the home. Adults understand children's vulnerabilities and are skilful at developing

trusting relationships with children, which enables them to identify when risks are emerging or escalating. Adults possess a good knowledge of how to keep children safe and there are comprehensive safety plans to guide them.

When children exhibit self-injurious behaviours, adults respond with empathy and understanding. Adults ensure that medical attention is offered, emotional support is provided and that children are supported to develop alternative coping strategies.

Children do not often go missing from home but, when they do, adults have very clear procedures to follow to ensure that children's whereabouts can be identified as swiftly as possible. Adults go to great lengths to maintain contact with children during such times, and their expressions of affection offer a reminder to children that they are missed. The response to missing incidents was a notable strength at this home in terms of the robustness and recording.

Sometimes there is disharmony between children living at the home. However, adults support children to repair relationships in order to restore feelings of safety and respect with one another. Adults approach children calmly and help them to reflect on their own actions and feelings, to help them find resolutions.

When children need to be held, the use of any measure is proportionate and necessary. Recordings have been improved since the last inspection and there is good oversight from the registered manager. On one occasion a discussion with the child following an incident was completed by an adult who was involved in the physical intervention. This could have hindered the child's willingness to express their feelings about it transparently.

Leaders understand their responsibilities in relation to safe recruitment practice and how both training and supervision for adults impacts on the care children receive. The training offer is focused on the individual needs of children as well as the development for individual adults, who value the opportunities they have to learn and progress.

Allegations made against adults working in the home are managed effectively to safeguard children from harm and reported effectively to the designated officer for safeguarding in the local authority. However, there have been a small number of allegations that have not been notified to the regulator and sometimes reports do not reflect the robustness of the actions taken in practice. The manager has worked with adults to improve the quality of such reports.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is a well-respected and valued leader who, along with her deputy, ensures that the adult team are working together cohesively. She understands the children and takes a calm and focused approach, which has been commented on positively by professionals, adults and children alike.

Leaders and managers advocate strongly to facilitate better outcomes for children. They work effectively with other professionals to co-ordinate plans and address the things that mean the most to children. Leaders are tenacious in seeking funding and practical support to enhance children's educational progress and are quick to raise issues and work with schools to remove any barriers to education.

There is a well-established team of adults working with the children. They receive regular supervision, with clear and child-centred objectives. There are varied opportunities for reflective practice, which are embedded within catch ups, daily conversations, reflective journals and appraisals. Children's views are captured and represented clearly within these forums, which provides a basis for adults to understand how they contribute to children's experiences.

Leaders and managers are continually seeking to improve the quality of care provided and to enhance the experiences of the children they care for. There is a transparent and positive working relationship with both the independent visitor and the regulator. This openness to challenge contributes to the development within the home and across the wider organisation, where learning is shared effectively.

Adults feel well supported by managers and leaders. This approachability enables adults to discuss their practice and learn from times when their responses or interactions are not helpful. Adults describe a kind and respectful culture where courteous challenge is welcomed and modelled effectively for children.

All of the requirements from the previous inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) are notified to the regulator comprehensively. In particular, allegations made against adults should be notified. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience, taking the circumstances of the restraint into account ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 9.60)

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, West Sussex BN16 3RN

Responsible individual: Matthew Langley

Registered manager: Francesca Scotland

Inspector

Tash Williams, social care inspector

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