

SC064182

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six children who have learning disabilities. The service provides one place for a short break and five long-term placements.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 May 2017

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: 23 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because

- The caring and affectionate relationships staff form with the children are a strength of this home. A parent said, 'There is a warmth towards my child from

the carers, which as a parent is nice to see.'

- Children continue to make good progress. They are encouraged to be as independent as possible.
- There is overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, carers, independent reviewing officers, therapists and social workers about the care and support the staff provide.
- Staff and management work well with families and welcome them into the home. By working effectively with the professionals involved in children's lives, staff ensure that they meet children's needs.
- Parents trust the staff to keep their children safe. There is a good safety record both in the home and when on trips out.
- The introduction of a new behaviour management strategy has resulted in fewer incidents and the use of restraint. Children benefit from the generally calm and happy atmosphere in this home.
- A parent said, 'Staff do their best to meet challenging needs, encourage independence, take children to various activities they enjoy.'

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/07/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/10/2015	Full	Good

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. (3) The requirements are that— (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (6) A full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, in writing. (Regulation 32(3)(d) Schedule 2(6))	30/06/2017
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and are enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(d)) In particular, to remove debris from one part of the garden, explore whether vegetation is safe, and ensure that fire doors are not wedged open.	30/06/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a child-centred home where children feel settled and regard it as 'their home'. A member of staff said, 'The children's experiences and progress is what matters.' A parent said that their child has made significant progress compared to their previous placement. She said it has been a 'brilliant experience' and that he 'has changed for the better. He's happy, he's settled and has made good relationships with staff.'

Children make good progress from their starting points. Some have made good progress in their personal care skills. They can now assist with dressing themselves, for example, by learning to fasten clothes using buttons, zips and laces. Improvements in communication mean some children respond better to verbal instructions rather than just visual prompts. Others are able to prepare snacks for themselves and have learned to use cutlery, improving their independence skills. In education, some children show improved concentration and motor skills. Some show better tolerance of activities with other children occasionally, improving their social skills.

The recent introduction of 'Enjoyment and achievement' booklets has been useful in providing each child with a record of their progress. These booklets include targets that children have achieved and photographs of their activities, such as enjoying meals to mark religious and cultural occasions, participating in trips out and choosing what clothes to wear. Children enjoy choosing a 'lucky dip' prize as a reward for achieving each target.

Staff incorporate their training into practice, for example, by having 'quiet days' when speaking is kept to a minimum to help those who are very sensitive to noise. A therapist said, 'They're a good team. They manage behaviour in a calm way.'

Children's health improves. They enjoy freshly cooked meals following healthy eating guidance. Some are fitter as a result of this diet and increased exercise. Staff ensure that children access all the health services they need and attend appointments. Staff prepare children well for medical interventions so that they do not fear these. For example, staff use social stories to help prepare children for hospital admissions. This, together with staff reassurance, help ensure that children get the health interventions they need. Children trust the staff.

All children are in education with one attending part-time education in the home. Attendance is good and children only miss school if unwell. Staff liaise well with school staff to support children's progress.

Children benefit from personalised daily activities. Some like the soothing effects of going for a drive with staff, bouncing on a trampoline in the garden, or playing football. There are activities further afield at weekends and in school holidays, such as trips to the seaside. Children have not experienced holidays with the staff yet.

Children grow vegetables and herbs in one part of the garden, which they then eat. The manager acknowledges that part of the garden needs improvement and there are plans

to develop this to make it more suitable for children with special needs. However, one area containing some building debris and broken glass needs more immediate attention. Also, as one child likes to put leaves in his mouth, staff should look into the safety of trees and plants.

There are some opportunities for children to link with the local community. For example, they donated cakes and clothes to charity and some of the vegetables they grow to the elderly. This helps them feel they are making a positive contribution.

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

Staff know the children well and meet their emotional needs. They advocate strongly for each child and want the best for them. A parent said, 'I can walk away and trust the staff. He's safe.' Staff show children affection. Children get hugs, foot rubs or cuddles whenever they wish. Use of pressure, such as from weighted blankets, is applied when children need this sensory experience.

The home has a good safety record with only one complaint from a member of the public. The manager referred this appropriately to the local authority for investigation, with the complaint judged to be unfounded. Effective supervision has meant that no children have gone missing from the home or while out on activities.

Staff protect the children. They assess risk well and make sure children feel safe and secure in their home. Staff refresh their skills in safeguarding to remain up-to-date with current issues, such as the risks of child sexual exploitation.

Behaviour management is good. Children feel secure in their routines. Staff anticipate well what some behaviours may mean and this reduces incidents. Staff communicate effectively with the children using a variety of communication methods. Some children reduce challenging behaviour and learn to self-regulate; for example, they take themselves to the quiet room to calm down when they have heightened anxiety.

An independent reviewing officer described how the staff had helped reduce one child's incidents of challenging behaviour, saying 'They found the triggers and found him self-soothing activities.' As a result, children experience longer periods of calm and reduced anxiety. Use of restraint is low. Staff only use this as a last resort to keep children and others safe.

Staff treat children with dignity and respect. They are sensitive to teenagers' emerging sexuality and make sure they have privacy.

Medication is well organised and administered safely. Staff involve the children in taking their medication as far as possible. Two staff witness each administration of medication and no medication errors have occurred. Staff make sure that they keep children's medication under review, watching for any effects on their behaviour or wellbeing. This helps ensure that medication is having the best effect on children's health.

Checks on staff are mostly thorough. Staff verify references and conduct checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service before people start work in the home. However, on one file, a gap in employment had not been explored, which would be an additional check on

the person's suitability.

The manager maintains checks of the premises, such as electricity and risk assessments, to ensure that the building is safe. Children take part in fire drills. Two fire doors were wedged open when staff were airing the building during the day. However, this could compromise safety in the event of a fire. Any damage is rapidly repaired to maintain the environment. A parent said, 'The building isn't shiny and new, but the care is the important thing.' There are plans to improve the sensory room to provide a better resource for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A permanent, experienced manager with a suitable qualification effectively manages the home. She seeks to improve her skills and knowledge, for example, by embarking on achieving a qualification in the care of children with autistic spectrum disorder. A parent said, 'The staff and the manager are very knowledgeable, kind, patient, accommodating and listen to my wishes and requests.' Another said, 'The staff are very approachable.'

Communication between staff and others involved in children's lives is effective. An independent reviewing officer spoke highly of the way the staff keep families and professionals informed, so that when it comes to the child's review, 'Nothing is ever a surprise.' Another independent reviewing officer finds the staff always prepare good-quality reports, which assist in reviews of children's care.

Staff show commitment to the children in their care. They work effectively as a team. A parent finds the home 'a well-run organisation, and there is a nucleus of senior staff who are well established in the organisation, which suggests that they are happy in their workplace.'

Effective monitoring, by both an independent visitor and by the registered manager, helps the service to develop. The manager, supported by the responsible individual, has a clear idea of the home's strengths and weaknesses and strives for continuous improvement.

Staff are well trained and supported. They receive a range of general and specialist training to help them work with the children. They describe recent autism training as 'great' and 'helped us work better with the children, which is what we want'. Regular supervision, team meetings and annual appraisal add to their support and development.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC064182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Registered provider address: 87 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8JA

Responsible individual: Jeffrey Darnell

Registered manager: Alina Opris

Inspector

Jacqueline Graves, social care inspector

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