

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 for up to six children who have autism spectrum disorder or learning disabilities.

The home registered with Ofsted in 2005.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2013.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2023

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 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2022	Full	Good
09/10/2019	Full	Good
15/10/2018	Full	Good
08/05/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Five children live permanently at this home. One child comes for three overnights every week for planned short stays.

Since the last inspection, one child moved to their next home. A successful transition was achieved by careful and considered planning that reflected the local authority plan. One child has moved in following meticulous preparation from the management team.

All children experience excellent care from a dedicated and committed staff team. Several of the children have lived at this home for a long time, and a number of staff have worked at this home for many years. The staff are skilled and attuned to the needs, personality and character of every child, and this helps to cultivate a harmonious, family-inspired household.

Every child goes to school. Attendance rates are high. Some children use electronic devices to enhance their communication. Staff use pictures and social stories combining signs, symbols and speech to broaden communication methods. The managers encourage staff to use the same communication techniques used by the children's schools. This helps to enrich the understanding and quality of the relationships between the children and the staff. The result is that every child makes significant progress from their starting point.

Children's parents visit the home regularly. The management team actively supports parental involvement and co-produces plans to ensure the care and support provided reflects parents' wishes. Local authority social workers value and recognise the good-quality support the children receive.

Every child is registered with a GP and dentist. Children receive additional medical help when this is necessary. Children regularly exercise, and this helps to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They take part in enjoyable and stimulating activities, including regular music therapy. Days out and seasonal involvement in a local community allotment project help to ensure inclusion and encourage healthy eating.

The staff prepare nourishing and nutritious meals. Sometimes, the children help with meal and snack preparation, and this helps to encourage choice. The dining room table offers a dedicated space for the children to eat together and provides some extra space for those children who may need more help or encouragement. However, staff do not tend to eat with or alongside the children. This arrangement is a missed opportunity for staff to model social behaviours.

The staff encourage a variety of independence skills, including home living and self-care. The managers and staff work to ensure that the environment remains in optimum condition. A dedicated handyperson ensures that day-to-day maintenance

and decoration are a priority. Reflecting children's preference for stimulation, the staff encourage and help children to choose the decoration for their bedroom. The home benefits from a dedicated space offering the potential to improve sensory experiences. However, since the last inspection, the space has become tired, and use of the equipment has diminished. This does not ensure that this aspect of the internal environment is as enhancing as it could be.

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

The children living in the home are looked after by one and sometimes two adults. This means the adults are continually by every child's side, and they receive constant supervision. Some children with particularly complex health needs have extra help and monitoring through the night from the waking night staff. This ensures children's safety around the clock.

Children do not go missing from home. There are no concerns about exploitation. The staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and understand that they have a responsibility to report any concerns to the manager, responsible individual or external professionals using the whistle-blowing procedure.

The managers work vigorously to promote a positive safeguarding culture. However, on one occasion, morning staff did not pass on relevant information to one child's school, resulting in unnecessary concern about one child. This does not ensure all staff recognise the significance of detailed communication with other agencies as an approach to keeping children safe.

Staff retention is high, and there have been minimal changes within the staff team. The managers are thorough in seeking and verifying previous employment references. The provider diligently completes Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Nonetheless, the managers can go further to ensure that the overseas checks are translated and readily available on file for inspection. This does not ensure the complete process for the screening of suitability is as thorough as it could be.

The manager deals promptly with any practice concerns and reports any allegations against staff to the designated officer. The staff complete safeguarding training, and the manager actively promotes team discussions to stimulate group learning about keeping children safe. This reiterates the expectation that staff speak out should they have any concerns about practice in the home.

Staff are skilled in obtaining any emergency treatment for children should this be necessary. Medication is securely stored. A well-organised system ensures suitable arrangements for the administration and disposal of every child's medication. Regular audits from the manager ensure the measures for medication remain suitable.

Since the last inspection, the need to use physical restraint has not arisen. The managers work closely with the other professionals involved in each child's network to formulate meticulous plans. Detailed risk assessments, behaviour support plans

and relaxation plans ensure that the help each child receives is bespoke and focuses on their unique and individual needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The long-standing and devoted registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. They are supported by an attentive senior practitioner and two steadfast team leaders. This skilful management team provides significant stability and reassurance for staff, parents and professionals.

The managers communication with the network of professionals involved with each child is highly effective. They work very well and efficiently with local authorities and other agencies to plan every child's care, admission and move on from the home. This ensures the care children receive is informed and insightful.

The managers routinely audit and monitor records. They welcome and learn from feedback. They meet regularly with the team to discuss the needs of each child and how every child's individual experiences can be improved.

Many members of the team are long-standing. New members of staff receive a comprehensive induction and the opportunity to shadow shifts and get to know the children before looking after them. This promotes continuity and dependability.

Staff are suitably qualified to care for the children. Staff receive regular child-focused supervision and an annual appraisal that notes their strengths and dedicated areas of responsibility. This helps to ensure the staff are continually reflecting on what is in the children's best interests.

The staff benefit from a broad range of training and are keen to continue to deepen their knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorder and learning disabilities. The manager looks for new initiatives to strengthen the quality of practice and has introduced mindfulness and intensive interaction, which is a practical, play-based approach to interacting with the children. The team welcomes and values the manager's venture to share up-to-date practices and encourage excellence.

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.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the opportunities for staff and children to sit and eat together are promoted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the design of the home should include any necessary adaptations to meet the needs of children with disabilities or specific health issues. In particular, ensure that the opportunities to enhance sensory development through the sensory room are improved. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.24)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. In particular, ensure consistent daily communication with schools. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that as set out in regulations 31-33, they are responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, ensure information relating to overseas checks is translated and readily available for inspection. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 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: John Timbs

Registered manager: Alina Opris

Inspector

Rosie Davie, Social Care Inspector

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