

SC068827

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2022.

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2024

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	outstanding
---	-------------

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

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2023	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
05/12/2022	Full	Inadequate
25/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress because they are looked after by staff who are committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with them. Interactions between children and staff are warm and nurturing. Children told the inspector that they trust the staff and they particularly like their keyworkers. One child said that living here is like living in a family home.

Staff support children to take part in activities and holidays that are in line with their talents, interests and preferences. Children enjoy making music and opportunities are created for them to develop their skills. This includes the creation of a music room, where children enjoy playing a range of musical instruments and recording their own music. Children also take great comfort from spending time with the organisation's therapy dog, whose presence enhances the homely feel of the environment.

Children are supported to engage and achieve in education. All children are enrolled in education, but some do not have access to full-time academic activities. The staff team and the manager are working closely with relevant external professionals. They are advocating for suitable education placements to be identified, with the aim of ensuring that children return to full-time education at the earliest opportunity.

Working closely with people who are important to children is given high priority. Careful planning ensures that children and their parents enjoy the time they spend together. Children's parents appreciate the support they receive from staff to ensure that family time is positive.

There is a sharp focus on supporting children to learn how to live as independently as possible, and children have made significant progress from their starting points. The individualised approach gives children the best chance of success, and their confidence and self-esteem improve as a result.

Children are given freedom and choice, and this is balanced with providing safe care. As a result of children's trusting relationships with staff, they feel comfortable to share their wishes and feelings. Children know how to complain and are confident that their voices will be heard. One child told the inspector that there was nothing to complain about.

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

Staff have a sound understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Additionally, the strong relationships between children and staff help to ensure that children become increasingly safe. In one example, a child has been able to gain a better understanding of their own risks, and this has significantly reduced their risk of being exploited.

Incidents of children going missing from home reduce over time and are now rare. When they do occur, staff follow agreed procedures to ensure that children return safely as soon as possible. Staff help children to understand the risks associated with going missing.

Children say that they feel safe at the home, and their parents and social workers are unanimous in the view that children are safe. One parent told the inspector that they 'feel like they have won the lottery' because of the decrease in the frequency and severity of their behavioural incidents since living at the home. The parent went on to describe the positive impact this has had on their relationship with the child.

Positive behaviour is promoted because staff help children to learn how to manage difficult emotions. When incidents occur, staff use effective de-escalation techniques. As a result, the need for physical restraint is rare and is always a last resort. The quality of records of physical restraint is excellent. They are shared with appropriate external professionals. This transparent approach further underpins the safeguarding culture and contributes to children's safety.

Safeguarding concerns are usually addressed robustly by the registered manager, with external safeguarding professionals involved as necessary. However, on one occasion, a child reported that they had been harmed during a physical restraint and records do not demonstrate that there was sufficient assessment of whether the staff involved in the incident should continue to work with children while an investigation was carried out. This shortfall in recording undermines the rigorous safeguarding process that took place in practice. There was no negative impact on children's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is passionate in her efforts to be an excellent role model and a trusted figure for the children and for the staff. Staff say that the registered manager's calm and consistent approach gives them confidence to suggest new ideas that can continually improve the way the home is run.

The registered manager has high aspirations for what children can achieve. She has sound understanding children's progress and of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She ensures that realistic plans are put in place to address any deficits in the quality of care provided to children.

The registered manager's practice in relation to staff training and development is exceptional. She ensures that they have access to learning tools that are interesting, challenging and thought-provoking.

Staff meetings take place regularly, and safeguarding professionals are invited to attend to explain their roles and responsibilities. This approach enhances staff understanding of their own duty to ensure children are protected from harm.

Staff receive meaningful supervision regularly. Records of supervision demonstrate that managers are assessing and auditing each staff member's performance. As a result, managers can be confident that staff fully understand how to meet children's needs in line with their care plans.

The registered manager's oversight and scrutiny of the home are extremely thorough. As a result, she has an exceptionally well-rounded view of the impact the quality of care is having on children's outcomes. For example, when incidents occur, the registered manager completes high-quality analysis to ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of a recurrence. The views of children and of staff are integral to this process.

The registered manager creates opportunities to apply findings from research to everyday practice. Being looked after by well-informed staff has a positive impact on children's progress, experience and safety.

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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that records demonstrate that staff working arrangements are carefully considered when safeguarding concerns arise.	04 November 2024

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: SC068827

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Surrey County Council, Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Christine Hamilton

Inspector

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024