

SC361789

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning difficulties.

The home is owned by a local authority. It is situated near a school for children who have additional needs and a children's home that offers short breaks.

Visit dates: 3 to 4 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 3 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Declined in effectiveness

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children are appropriately cared for in line with their plans. These are agreed by parents and professional stakeholders. Children appear happy and comfortable with the adults caring for them. Attention to meeting sensory needs has seen bespoke changes to the environment, which include a gym, soft play room and sensory flooring.

All children are making progress and have ongoing targets for personal development. A focus on improving children's communication skills is successful in allowing them to make more choices and is reducing their anxiety and frustration. Staff work in partnership with other professionals and parents to support children. Specialist help is readily available.

Children are able to spend time with their families. Parents reported positively on the efforts made by staff to improve visits and communication for children. In particular, this includes the introduction of supportive technology.

Feedback from parents and professionals about the home and the improvements made is specifically positive and optimistic for children.

The safety of children

The children living in this home are particularly vulnerable and present with complex needs, including autism spectrum disorder. They require lifelong care and support. Careful matching of children and assessing the risks presented have ensured that the children can live successfully together and feel safe. Children have dedicated staff looking after them, who provide continuity and consistency of care. Understanding behaviour and risk has become significant in directing staff practice.

Improved communication with children is contributing to reducing behaviour which challenges adults.

The use of restraint is infrequent appropriate, to keep one child safe. Physical holds are kept to a minimum, and all incidents are reviewed to inform future behaviour support.

Children have not gone missing from this home.

Leaders and managers

Following the previous inspection, an experienced manager was appointed and registered with Ofsted on a temporary basis. A permanent qualified manager has

since been appointed, and the two are initially working together. These managers have been diligent in instigating and securing changes to benefit children. Shortfalls have been addressed, the staff team is more confident in their ability and there is significant improvement for children. Delegation of responsibility is utilising staff skills and driving continuous practice development. Development planning is robust and reviewed on a regular basis. It prescribes responsibility and includes a staff training and development plan.

Managers and staff have risen to the challenges of COVID-19. A safety protocol is in place, which includes everybody having their temperature taken on arrival at the home. Despite related staff sickness and absence, the continuity and consistency of care provided to children have been maintained. Links with education providers have been maintained, and plans for a return to full-time education for children are well established.

Following consultation with children, all areas of the home have been refurbished. Significant investment has ensured the personalisation of each child's living space. A parent reported that they are particularly impressed with the introduction of a soft play room, where their son can express his frustration safely and, as a result, becomes calm much more quickly.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the home could be judged good if we were to carry out a full inspection now.

No requirements or recommendations are made as a result of this visit.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC361789

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

Registered provider address: Cornwall Council, Accounts Payable, PO Box 727, Truro TR1 9GP

Responsible individual: Tony Phillips-Jones

Registered manager: Sharron Adams

Inspector

Janice Hawtin, Social Care Inspector

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