

SC361789

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to five children with a disability and associated complex needs.

The home is owned by a local authority. It is situated near a school for children with additional needs.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 6 August 2021. They were previously the registered manager for another provision.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 3 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

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: 3 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
03/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/03/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/11/2018	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Carers understand children's needs well. They help children who are non-verbal to communicate their views through pictures. Carers observe children's behaviours carefully, responding in ways that help children to make choices.

The home is well decorated and child-friendly. There are different spaces to give children opportunities to play and relax. Despite the restrictions of the building, the staff team has created homely spaces for children, which have been adapted in line with children's preference. One child felt anxious about the flooring as it reminded him of being in hospital. The registered manager replaced the flooring with a more homely covering.

Children make measurable, positive progress that is celebrated. Carers have high expectations for children. They support them to try new experiences and learn new skills. For example, one child had not been to a shop before and now goes regularly.

Carers set achievable targets for children. There is good oversight by managers and targets are regularly reviewed. This means that children's vulnerabilities are easily identified and additional support is put in place.

Carers encourage children to learn independence skills appropriate to their age and understanding.

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

The home has had one error in administering medication since the last inspection. No child was adversely affected by this. Leaders and managers ensure that errors are investigated thoroughly, and lessons are learned.

Carers keep children safe during their short breaks. There are good safeguarding procedures in place and carers follow these when children are at risk of harm. Carers also liaise with local authority safeguarding agencies to obtain advice and guidance when they have worries about a child.

Children's plans are detailed and thorough. Behaviour-management plans are useful documents that give carers strategies to respond effectively to children's needs. Risk assessments clearly identify vulnerabilities that may affect children's safety. They ensure that carers and children are protected from hazards both inside and outside the home. However, plans are not always reviewed promptly.

Restraint is used in the home when it is needed to protect children and carers from harm. Recording of incidents is detailed and there is evidence of reflection leading to improvements in practice.

The registered manager maintains good communication with parents and professionals. This ensures that the team knows the changing health needs of the children. This is especially important as children spend one or two nights at a time at the home and their needs can change between visits.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has driven considerable improvements to the service since the last inspection. The team has made positive changes, despite experiencing staff shortages. Further difficulties were experienced when a child was accommodated full-time as an emergency placement. This situation was managed well, and risks were fully considered.

The team is experienced and skilled. Currently, the home has staff vacancies that have not been filled for some time. This has not affected the quality of the care provided but it has limited the number of children who are able to have short-break provisions. Leaders and managers continue to attempt to recruit appropriate carers.

Carers told the inspector that they feel fully supported by leaders and managers. They hold the registered manager in high esteem. This ensures that there is a stable and committed team caring for children through the most challenging circumstances.

Carers receive reflective, supportive supervisions. Recordings are generally very good. The inspector saw evidence of learning needs being identified and good discussions being had about practice dilemmas. However, actions from one supervision are not always followed up in subsequent sessions.

Leaders and managers are not ensuring that all staff have individual annual appraisals to assess their performance and fitness to carry out their role.

The registered manager ensures that carers consistently have access to good-quality training. When techniques do not meet the needs of children, new training is accessed and the team's skills are updated.

The registered manager challenges plans that no longer meet the needs of children. They persistently drive improvements for children. One local authority social worker told the inspector, 'The manager highlighted to me that the child was not happy at school. It was because of them [the manager] that we all got together to find a way forward and communicated about how to best meet his needs. Without the home intervening, this would not have happened.'

Parents speak highly of the provision. One parent told the inspector that the home gives their child experiences that he otherwise would not have: 'They took him on boat rides. I just couldn't do that safely with him. He loves going there.' Another parent said it was a 'fantastic' provision.

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 care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that plans are regularly reviewed and updated.	13 April 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. This relates specifically to checking that actions from a supervision are followed up in the next supervision. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once a year. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC361789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cornwall Council

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

Responsible individual: Tamsin Moorhouse

Registered manager: Sharron Adams

Inspector

Penelope Kutz, Social Care Inspector

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