

SC368637

Registered provider: Channels & Choices Kent LLP

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children aged between seven and 16. It is operated by a private organisation. The home supports children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and attachment issues. Some children may have a diagnosis of autism. There were three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2022.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 December 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
12/10/2021	Full	Outstanding
01/07/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children live in a nurturing home. Their achievements are celebrated, regardless how big or small. There are positive affirmations in the children's bedrooms that celebrate them and offer encouragement. This empowers children and increases their confidence about what they can achieve. One child said that the words of affirmation also helped cheer them up when they were feeling down.

Children are happy and feel supported. They have positive experiences and enjoy engaging in a range of activities of their choice, and others provided by the home and the organisation. These include drama club, horse riding, going to theme parks, taking part in talent shows and attending an activity centre. The home provides opportunities for the children to build positive relationships with each other. For example, some children are singing together at the organisation's talent show. The children are excited and proud about this.

Staff understand the importance of children engaging in a range of activities and are relentless in supporting them. Staff engage well with children who struggle to participate in activities by listening to them and tailoring support to their individual needs. As a result, the children are making great strides in engaging in activities. This attention to the individual needs of children is a key strength of the staff.

All the children are making exceptional progress. They are all in full-time education. One child who was not in education before moving into the home is now aiming to return to mainstream school. Staff found a tutor to support the child to achieve their goals. The child is now enjoying school and is proud of their achievements. Children are making progress due to the high aspirations that staff have for them and the support that they receive.

Staff listen to children carefully. Children can freely voice their feelings and know that staff will respond promptly. Staff are child-focused and provide the care that children want and need. For example, children were consulted about their Christmas traditions. Staff are ambitious and forward thinking. They are reviewing their weekly meetings and looking at alternative ways to gather children's views, as the current approach can feel institutional.

Family time is supported and encouraged. One child who recently lost a family member is being supported to meet with members of their extended family and to attend the funeral.

Staff build positive relationships with children and are attuned to their needs. When children become upset, staff offer appropriate emotional support. Reflective staff meetings enable staff to understand the children's needs and to find the most effective ways to support them.

Children moving on from the home are helped to achieve this in a planned and gradual way. Children's feelings and emotions are explored to ensure that appropriate support is offered. There is communication with the child and relevant professionals throughout the process to ensure that everyone involved knows and understands the plan. The organisation provides outreach support after a child moves to foster care and remains in contact with the child, to provide continuity.

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

There is a positive safeguarding culture in the home. Consequently, safeguarding processes are clear and transparent. Staff and managers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and ensure that they work together with other professionals. Incidents are managed well, and necessary action is taken to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively. Safeguarding records are clear and comprehensive.

Managers take a reflective approach to learning following any incident. They take appropriate steps to reduce risks and remain vigilant about safeguarding processes. Where there are areas of concern, managers are proactive in ensuring that appropriate support and training are in place for staff.

Staff build positive relationships with children and these help to reduce the need for physical interventions. When physical interventions have been used, which is now rare, they are carried out safely and as a last resort. Managers are proactive in reviewing physical interventions and incidents to ensure that they and staff understand why they happen, so that appropriate support can be put in place.

Staff know the children well, so they can confidently assess risks and manage them accordingly. They support children to understand dangers and the impact that their behaviours may have. Any concerns or worries are swiftly identified, and care plans are adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of the children.

The home uses restorative practice to address behaviour. The consequences put in place are age-appropriate and show that consideration is given to educating the children to be able to change and improve behaviours.

Staff and managers have highly valued relationships with other professionals, including social workers. This helps them to consider children's needs carefully and thoughtfully when arranging meetings of a sensitive nature.

Recruitment processes are effective. This ensures that only appropriately vetted individuals work at the home and provide care for children. Managers understand their health and safety responsibilities and ensure that effective processes are followed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are highly experienced and are committed to ensuring that children receive high-quality care. The registered manager was on annual leave during the

inspection, therefore the deputy manager, supported by the responsible individual, stepped in seamlessly. Managers work well together and the registered manager leads by example. As a result, the deputy manager is confident in her role and children and staff receive consistent support from managers.

Leaders and managers know the strengths of the home and the areas for development. The deputy manager and responsible individual know the children well and are proud of the progress that they are making. Managers reflect on the challenges that they have faced and how they have overcome them. Leaders are proactive in finding and implementing the appropriate training for staff to meet the needs of the children. For example, specific training on mental health was provided to staff. Staff who attended the training found it beneficial, saying that it offered clear practical support.

Staff receive regular supervision and feel valued by managers. Appraisals take place yearly and are used effectively to support growth and development. Several staff members have progressed to senior roles due to the support that they received from managers. Managers are adept at identifying staff interests and skills, to enable them to develop their careers within the organisation. This empowers staff and fosters a positive culture that supports improving outcomes for children. One staff member said, 'I am confident in asking for assistance and communicating my concerns, as I know the management team will listen and take appropriate action.'

Staff have various opportunities to reflect on practice. 'Therapeutic thinking time', led by the organisation's therapist, takes place regularly to explore what is going well for the children and the barriers that they are facing. Staff value the shift reflections that take place at the end of each day. Managers review notes from shift reflections and offer additional support to staff when required.

Managers maintain highly effective working relationships with external professionals and partner agencies. Social workers are promptly informed of incidents, with relevant and appropriate information-sharing. Managers demonstrate outstanding practice. They persistently challenge professionals to ensure that the children's rights and entitlements are met.

Feedback from professionals and family members is extremely positive. They praise staff and managers for their communication, with one parent describing it as 'brilliant'. One social worker was keen to say that all the staff know the children and that this had been key in helping them to understand their child's lived experience. Describing the level of support from staff, the social worker said, 'I cannot praise them enough.'

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: SC368637

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Channels & Choices Kent LLP

Registered provider address: Atlas Chambers, 33 West Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 2RE

Responsible individual: Kate Stephenson

Registered manager: Nicola Standen

Inspectors

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