

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.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2022

At the time of inspection three children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 March 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: 14 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
12/10/2021	Full	Outstanding
01/07/2019	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff provide high quality, well-informed care that helps children to make progress in ways that significantly improve their life chances. Children respond well to a team who support them to think about their feelings and the impact of their experiences before moving into the home. As a result, children who had previously been identified as not able to live with foster carers, now feel well prepared to take that next step and live with a family again.

When children have not felt ready to move to foster care, they have been supported to reflect on this and to express their concerns. Staff use their understanding of children's experiences to ensure that any plans for children are carried out at a pace that helps the children to feel in control.

The needs of the children are central to all of the care plans, risk assessments and independence planning for children. The comprehensive 'Stepping Stones' programme highlights areas in which children may need support. Staff use creative methods to help children to reach their goals, such as specifically designed board games, one-to-one sessions and, where appropriate, group activities.

Professionals and family members are consistent in their praise for staff. The well thought out care arrangements and the consistency of the staff team have been highlighted by all as being important factors that have helped children to make significant progress. Staff communicate effectively with the professional network to ensure that plans stay on track and that children access the help that they need.

All children achieve high levels of attendance at school. They talk with pride about their school days and what they have achieved. Older children have been supported to make their GCSE choices for next year, with their future careers in mind.

The children's voice is at the heart of everything within the home. Children are encouraged to participate in daily community meetings with their peers and the staff. These meetings are skilfully led by staff to provide a safe space for children to reflect and to make sense of any difficult feelings or challenges. This helps children to develop good social skills and to benefit from group living with their peers.

Staff celebrate all successes for children, no matter how small. The significance of small steps is well understood and will often result in both acknowledgment and reward. Rewards in the home vary from a book token or a fun face mask to bigger trips out, such as to West End shows. Children respond well and talk with great enthusiasm about these experiences. Children and staff also choose a 'Star of the week', which can be anyone.

Children are encouraged to give back to the local community by involvement in charity work. A recent sponsored run and a cake sale have raised several hundreds of pounds for various charities. This achievement has been highly praised by both staff in the home and in the wider organisation, and children feel proud as a result.

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

The strength of relationships that children have with staff has meant that children are generally very well behaved. They understand that staff are looking out for them, and this helps them to accept boundaries. Staff help children to understand dangers and to learn to make safer choices. As a result, children who have previously demonstrated high levels of risk-taking behaviour have made significant progress in either reducing or stopping this completely.

Staff are vigilant and notice when any change in a child's presentation is cause for concern. They intervene promptly and use creative strategies such as stress relief toys and 'worry monsters' to help children to express what may be making them anxious and to develop coping skills.

Incidents of physical interventions are rare. When they have occurred, the children's physical and emotional wellbeing is a priority. Incidents are brief and they are clearly recorded. After each incident, there is opportunity for staff and children to explore what may have led to the incident and how to manage things differently in the future.

Children do not go missing from the home. Nevertheless, leaders have been proactive in making sure that children understand potential risks and that staff know what to do should a child go missing.

Staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the risks that children face. Staff are guided by effective safety plans to ensure that children's needs are well understood. Safety plans are regularly updated following any slight change to a child's behaviour or if there is an indication of increased risk.

Before children move into the home, managers ensure that they fully understand and can meet each child's needs. They understand the areas where children may be vulnerable, and they have the skills and resources that they need to keep children safe and to help them to make progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an experienced registered manager, supported by an equally experienced deputy manager. Both have high expectations of what the children can achieve and high expectations of their staff in relation to the quality of care that

they provide. As a result, the staff team have shared values and aspirations in relation to helping children to maximise their potential and to feel cared for.

Leaders support the professional development of staff through detailed appraisals that link to comprehensive performance plans. As a result of this, several members of staff have achieved promotion and feel ready to take on more responsibility. While promotion has sometimes led to staff having to move on from the home, these events are still celebrated by staff and children. Staff understand the emotional impact on children of staff leaving, and visits are arranged in order to help positive endings and to maintain relationships that are important to children.

Leaders have gained an exceptional knowledge of the progress that children make, through regular meetings with children and with keyworkers. If, for some reason, progress for a child stalls for a period of time, managers notice and there is a targeted response to this to help children to overcome any barriers to success.

All staff receive regular and effective supervision. This supports the learning and development of staff and there is a strong focus on wellbeing to ensure that staff are well placed to maintain high standards of care. Managers are present and visible within the home and staff can go to them whenever they need support.

Managers listen to staff concerns and take their views into account when developing the service. A recent change in the staff rota was made in response to staff feedback. Staff appreciate being listened to and feel that the new arrangements provide them with a better work/life balance.

Managers have excellent systems in place to ensure that they have good oversight of care practice in the home. They have daily check-ins with staff and daily audits to ensure that recording is of good quality, and they produce monthly reports to highlight areas of strength and areas for development. Managers make good use of constructive feedback from the home's independent visitor to make improvements to the service.

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

Inspector

Mark Newington, social care inspector

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