

SC373941

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children who are experiencing complex life and developmental challenges.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 16 December 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/06/2019	Full	Outstanding
01/08/2018	Full	Good
01/06/2017	Full	Good
12/12/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by an empathic and stable team of staff, who develop warm relationships with children. This helps children to feel able to share their worries, in the knowledge that they will receive the support they need. Staff show a genuine interest in the children and their views, and interact positively with them.

The impact of the COVID-19 restrictions has been creatively navigated. Staff help children to engage in a range of activities, which has introduced them to different experiences inside and outside the home.

The education and the individual learning needs of children are well supported by staff. During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual learning has been strengthened with access to tutors where children need this.

Staff are successfully developing their skills in the new therapeutic approach, which is being embedded in practice and is enhancing children's day-to-day experiences. The staff team ensures that specialist health support for children is accessed when it is needed. However, the health needs of one child are not fully understood. Although there is interim support provided by specialist agency staff to address the child's presenting behaviours, this is not based on a comprehensive assessment. This is necessary to help ensure that the child receives the right support for their specific individual needs.

Through the warmth and understanding demonstrated by staff, children feel able to explore their developing sense of identity. Children's relationships with one another are supportive, reflecting their relationships with staff. Staff support and enable children to keep in touch with their family and friends, which children really appreciate.

Consultation with children is effective. Children feel able to raise any concerns they may have. Staff regularly feed back to children on their suggestions about ways to improve the home. The explanatory guide to the home is sensitively written in a child-friendly way, and includes information on children's rights. Children know their rights and how to access advocacy support.

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

Children feel safe in the home, and understand how staff support them to keep themselves safe outside of the home. Staff are aware of emerging risks for children. There are detailed risk management plans in place for each child. Staff have a sound understanding of individual vulnerabilities and how to support each child effectively. Staff are provided with appropriate guidance to address known risks.

Where there are risks identified for children outside of the home, the team appropriately shares concerns with statutory agencies. Working collaboratively with agencies, staff help to safeguard children effectively, therefore ensuring that risks are addressed. However, Ofsted was not notified of a small number of significant safeguarding concerns where there was statutory involvement.

The small number of allegations made against staff have been appropriately reported to the designated officer. While no external action was required, the interim manager identified a number of issues and put in place measures to improve practice and provide support for staff.

An investigation was undertaken by the manager following an incident regarding the administering of prescribed medication to children. The investigation identified a number of practice shortfalls. While there have been no further incidents, identified actions arising from the investigation have not been implemented within a reasonable time frame. This includes the assessment of the staff's competence in administering medication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has been seconded to another role within the local authority. The interim manager has been in post for six months. The interim manager has a good understanding of the children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. Staff feel very supported by managers and feel that being in the team is like being part of a 'family'.

New staff are welcomed into the team with an appropriate induction. All staff are supported with regular individual supervision. The learning and development needs of staff are identified effectively in their individual supervision sessions. However, relevant training has not been consistently identified and provided, to enable staff to gain an understanding of the needs of all the children in their care. Staff have themselves identified that they do not have the required training to support the individual needs of all the children. Staff have therefore not had the knowledge to successfully support the needs of all the children in the home.

One child in the home has specialist agency staff to support them. Systems to ensure the regular monitoring of this arrangement have been agreed but not yet implemented. This means that there is not an appropriate level of management oversight and review of this arrangement. Consequently, the quality of the care provided for the child and the effect of this care on other children in the home are not being monitored effectively.

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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the child's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii))	30 June 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team, where appropriate;	30 June 2021

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	30 June 2021

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: SC373941

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Rugg

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Maria Lonergan, Social Care Inspector

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