

SC373958

Registered provider: East Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

There were three children living at the home at the time of inspection.

The previous registered manager left the home in December 2023. A new manager has been appointed.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 March 2024

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: 6 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/10/2022	Full	Good
26/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
14/05/2019	Full	Outstanding
25/06/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by a skilled and dedicated staff team. The staff understand and meet the children's differing care needs well. They provide therapeutic parenting in line with the homes model of care. The children are thriving because of the good-quality care and support that they receive.

The staff understand the children's educational needs and support all the children to achieve. They help the children to understand the importance of education. Staff creatively support children who have previously struggled in school to re-engage. The children receive the individualised education that they need because of the continued advocacy of leaders. Consequently, the children make good educational progress in relation to their starting points.

Social workers and parents consistently praise the staff for the positive difference that they make. Communication with professionals and parents is good. This means that all parties feel included in decision making. One social worker commented that this was the best children's home that they work with. Team meetings, supported by a dedicated member of the local child and adolescent mental health team, foster a genuine team around the child approach.

Staff seek children's views through individual conversations. These help staff to understand how the children are feeling and build relationships. However, these conversations do not always gain children's wider views of the service, often focusing on basic issues such as meal choices.

Staff ensure that the children enjoy a vast range of activities. These are chosen based on individual children's interests. When children have particular interests, this is actively promoted. For example, staff supported a child to seek work at a local wildlife park. Children go abroad and experience holidays and different cultures. Children talk with real passion about these experiences and are genuinely happy about them.

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

Staff have a good knowledge of the safeguarding risks for children and how to reduce these. They benefit from the clear guidance in children's regularly updated risk assessments. These guide staff about how to best support children at times of high anxiety.

Staff know what to do when children go missing from the home and manage these situations well. Staff do all that they can to ensure that the child returns home safely. Staff work well with the children to help them to better understand risk and convey the level of concern that staff have about them. Consequently, the frequency of these events has reduced.

The staff work together to provide clear and consistent boundaries and guidance. Consequently, there has been a reduction in risk-taking behaviour and the children are safer. This consistent approach has resulted in less need for the use of physical restraint. Managers have good oversight of any physical intervention and offer good support to the child and staff involved.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective, and the manager maintains a good working relationship with local safeguarding professionals. Any allegations or concerns are shared immediately, and the manager takes appropriate action.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new manager started as soon as the previous manager left. Staff feel that this change was managed well, and they continue to feel well supported. Staff describe the new manager as 'approachable'.

The manager and deputy manager have high aspirations for the children in their care and share these with the staff team. The new manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has worked well with staff to quickly begin to drive improvement.

There is a comprehensive training plan in place to ensure that all staff have the skills to meet the children's individual needs. Specialised training is introduced when needed. This ensures that staff know how to respond when children display new behaviours.

The manager provides staff with effective supervision that encourages them to reflect on their work and how best to support the children. However, staff have not always received supervision as frequently as is outlined in the homes policy.

One significant event was not notified to Ofsted and some other notifications have been delayed. This reduces the oversight that the regulator has.

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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	30 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff receive supervision in line with the homes policy ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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: SC373958

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Fiona Lewis

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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