

SC396813

Registered provider: Chailey Heritage Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a charity. It provides care for up to 27 children with profound physical disabilities, sensory impairments and complex medical needs who may also have learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 12 children were staying across the three bungalows. This includes children who live at the home long term and those who attend for weekly boarding and short breaks.

A non-maintained special school is also on site, catering for children and young people aged three to 19 years. Adults receive residential care in Care Quality Commission registered homes on the same site. A team of nurses, therapists and specialists, provided by Sussex Community Foundation Trust, is also based on site and provides medical support. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this setting.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2023	Full	Good
30/11/2022	Full	Good
21/09/2021	Full	Good
13/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive nurturing care from staff who are committed to ensuring that their needs are fully met. Staff are adept at understanding each child's communication style. They are respectful of children's wishes and are well prepared to represent children at their review meetings.

Staff help children to engage in a wide range of positive activities and experiences every day. These activities are planned with care. Children's views, likes and dislikes inform the comprehensive activity schedule. Children are also safely supported to go on trips and holidays and to spend time with their families and the people who are important to them.

Children make good progress because of the support that they receive from staff. However, children's plans are not always up to date or helpful for staff. While the impact of this shortfall is reduced by a committed core team of staff and house managers who know the children well, important issues are not always clear. For example, not all children's faiths or cultural needs are sufficiently explained in their plans. Consequently, one child and family's specific religious wishes are not clear. In another example, the expectations for one aspect of one child's personal care routine are confusing.

Staff speak fondly about children and are proud of the progress they make. Examples of progress include children becoming more independent with their personal care, more willing to try different foods and activities, better able to express how they are feeling and more tolerant of equipment that improves their mobility.

Admissions are mostly well planned and carried out at the child's pace. Some children have moved out of the home since the last inspection. For most children, this has been well planned, and they have been well prepared. When things do not go according to plan, lessons are learned, and practice is improved.

Staff support children to engage in education. There is a shared understanding of children's educational goals, and staff help children to achieve them outside of school time.

Staff support children with their complex health needs and liaise effectively with external agencies and health professionals. Procedures regarding the administration of medication have strong oversight. Medication errors are rare. When they occur, corrective action is swift and thorough.

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

Staff understand the considerable risks and challenges that children face, and they manage these well.

Feedback to inspectors from parents and other professionals is largely positive. When complaints are received, they are addressed in line with the provider's complaints procedure. Learning from complaints is acted on. Leaders are in the process of investigating a complaint that has recently been received and managers confirmed that all parties will be consulted as part of the investigation.

Permanent staff are safely and carefully vetted. However, recruitment records for agency staff do not always demonstrate that they are checked in line with the requirements of The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. Specifically, not all gaps in employment are clearly explored nor are the reasons for leaving all previous roles with children and vulnerable adults.

Staff sensitively support children to manage difficult behaviours and emotions. When children's behaviours escalate and require more restrictive physical intervention, this is clearly outlined in their plans and is monitored robustly. This approach successfully reduces the likelihood of such intervention being required in the future.

Processes for managing health and safety matters and maintenance tasks are very good. As a result, repairs are addressed in a timely manner and the physical environment is safe and secure.

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

The registered manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has an ambitious vision for future development. However, there are some shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home. These are having a negative impact on the morale of the staff team and, if not addressed, could lessen the quality of care that children receive in the future.

Management oversight of children's plans is not sufficiently robust. Consequently, plans are not always clear. For example, there is a lack of clarity regarding staffing ratios for one child. Another child's plans lack detail about the support that they need and the exact nature of the allergies that they have. Additionally, it is not always clear when plans have been updated and what is the most up-to-date information.

Recruitment remains an ongoing challenge and managers are taking a wide range of steps to address this. In the meantime, there has been an increase in the use of agency and bank staff to cover gaps. On some shifts, there have not been enough experienced or suitably skilled staff. House managers and the core staff on duty work hard to reduce the negative impact on children. However, several staff members expressed their concerns to inspectors regarding staffing arrangements. Team meeting minutes show that managers are discussing the current situation and their plans with staff and are seeking their views, but there remains a disconnect between the views and experience of some staff and the management team.

Managers and staff have developed close working relationships with other agencies. Social workers and health professionals talk positively about the service and the communication with staff at the home.

Overall, staff are positive about the support that they receive from their line managers. However, not all staff receive supervision and appraisals at the frequency deemed appropriate by managers. This includes new staff. In one example, a new staff member told inspectors that their probation reviews are frequently cancelled, and records indicate that the worker has not received any individual supervision during the nine months they have been in post. As a result, managers are not providing staff with regular opportunities to reflect on their practice and discuss their professional development.

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, The 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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. (Regulation 9 (1)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that children's faith and cultural needs are sufficiently explained in their plans.	14 February 2025
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(h))	14 March 2025
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))	14 February 2025

The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	14 March 2025
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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: SC396813

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Chailey Heritage Foundation

Responsible individual: Gareth Germer

Registered manager: Sarah Leddy

Inspectors

Helen Simmons, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager
Matt Hedges, Senior His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care

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