

SC430022

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to six children with complex needs who require specialist support. Six children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2018.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 July 2025

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: 18 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2024	Full	Good
20/02/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
19/12/2023	Full	Inadequate
31/08/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children spoke to the inspectors during the inspection. The other two children were observed participating in their daily routines. Children have positive relationships with staff and warm interactions. The children feel supported by the staff. These relationships have contributed to children making progress from their starting points.

Since the last inspection, three children have moved out of the home and two children have moved in. The manager considers whether they can meet the needs of new children combined with the needs of the children already living at the home. New children are welcomed and supported to build relationships with staff. Children who have moved out have been supported to return to family members.

Children's engagement and attendance in education are variable. Some children make notable progress with their learning. One child has successfully completed their GCSE exams and attended their prom celebration. Other children struggle with attendance. Staff encourage children to attend and discuss the importance of education with them. Leaders and managers take an active role in working with educational professionals to implement additional support to improve children's attendance. This approach has been successful for some children.

Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to explore their interests and participation in activities. Children regularly enjoy the cinema, swimming and visiting the coast. Staff capture children's experiences using photos and personalised memory books. These opportunities enhance the children's experiences.

Children are supported to spend meaningful time with people who are important to them. This has helped children to maintain family links.

The staff provide regular children's meetings and ad hoc conversations. They respond to children's views. These approaches encourage children to share their views and feel listened to.

The home is spacious and well maintained. There are photos of the children in the communal areas. Children's bedrooms are designed to reflect their individual personalities. One child is preparing to move into an independent flat in the grounds and has personalised this flat in preparation. However, at times children have not had access to parts of the home, including the kitchen. This has been to keep children safe due to incidents. These restrictions have not been kept under review and detract from the home's ethos.

One child has struggled with peer relationships outside the home. On many occasions the child has been up late at night and become distressed while on the phone. On one occasion, this resulted in the police visiting the home due to the noise. One child made a

complaint due to being kept up. This complaint has not been fully addressed by the manager and staff. The child who struggles with peer relationships outside the home has not been provided with education and support regarding positive peer relationships. This does not support the child to withdraw from harmful relationships or prevent the reoccurrence of incidents. This lack of action fails to give realistic expectations of positive behaviour.

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

Staff help to keep children safe. When children go missing from the home, staff act quickly to locate them. They follow missing-from-care protocols and work with professionals to support children to return safely. Staff work collaboratively to coordinate locating children. When children return, they are welcomed home and provided with a safe environment for them to return to. Staff talk to them about the reason for their absence and help them to engage with ideas to prevent future incidents. This has been successful in supporting children to reduce missing-from-care incidents.

All staff have completed training in the use of physical intervention. On occasion, staff have used this as a last resort to keep children safe. Physical interventions are proportionate and recorded well. Managers follow these up by speaking with staff and children. Managers review these incidents carefully and think about additional support that can be given to children. As a result, there has been a reduction in the use of physical interventions.

Staff work well with other professionals. They make referrals to other agencies, such as substance misuse practitioners and domestic violence charities, to request extra support for children. Staff talk to children about the risks they face and support them to understand how to keep safe. This approach helps to support children to be safer in the home and community.

When children have raised concerns about staff, these have been taken seriously. Investigations take place and these are discussed with the relevant agencies. Children receive clear information and a response to the outcome of their concern.

Staff carry out room searches when they identify specific risks. They have removed harmful items that place children at risk of harm. Staff talk with children about the searches and the reasons for these.

Staff meet children's health needs and support them to attend appointments. On two occasions, children were given the wrong dosage of non-prescribed medication. On another occasion, a child returned home significantly under the influence of alcohol. On both occasions, the staff failed to seek medical advice for the children. Additionally, children's plans do not detail how staff should respond to children when they return under the influence of alcohol. This does not provide appropriate medical attention for children.

At times, children's behaviour has challenged staff. These incidents are well managed, and staff take appropriate action to keep children safe. However, on several occasions, managers have not notified Ofsted regarding serious incidents. This has limited Ofsted's capacity to monitor incidents of this nature.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A qualified, experienced manager leads the home. She is committed to her role and understands the home's strengths and the areas for development. An equally committed deputy manager supports her. Staff say that they feel well supported by managers.

Several staff are new to their roles. Safer recruitment checks have been followed. New staff are provided with a thorough induction. This has supported new staff with developing and understanding their roles.

All staff have taken part in mandatory training. Staff benefit from training that is specific to the needs of the children, such as substance-misuse training. This has helped staff have a better understanding of the children's vulnerabilities.

Staff team meetings are regular and child centred. The manager provides staff with important updates and practice improvements. During meetings, staff are supported to reflect on their approaches. This helps staff to reflect and improve on their practice, ensuring the children receive a high standard of care.

The manager and staff work well with children's parents and other professionals, including social workers, education professionals and the police. Feedback from professionals and parents is positive. One parent said, '[The child] has been there a while now staff are just brilliant. They keep me updated and are in contact a lot, we work together, they include me in everything. I am happy [the child] is doing well.'

When staff receive supervision sessions, these are detailed and support reflective practice. However, these have not always been within the timescales suggested by the home's policy. Several members of staff have considerable gaps in supervision sessions. As a result, staff do not always get the chance to share their concerns and experiences and develop their practice.

Staff are either enrolled on a level 3 qualification course or have gained this qualification. However, one staff member has not gained this within the required timescale.

The manager has met two requirements from the last inspection. One has been restated, and four further requirements have been set.

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
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)) This requirement has been restated.	13 August 2025
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;	13 August 2025

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a) (2)(a)(v)(vii)(b))	
The health and well-being standard is that— children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(b) (2)(a)(c)) In particular, ensure that medical attention is sought when children are under the influence of alcohol or substance misuse and following any medication errors.	13 August 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— 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; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))	13 August 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	13 August 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that all records are clear and detail the information in a concise and factual way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 3.10)

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: SC430022

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Suffolk County Council

Registered provider address: Babergh District Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

Responsible individual: Glynn Smith

Registered manager: Michele Green

Inspectors

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector
Emilja Myers, Social Care Inspector

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