

SC483662

Registered provider: Caretech community services limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to six children with learning and physical disabilities. The service is privately owned and forms part of a larger social care organisation.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2020.

At the time of inspection, six children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2025

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: 13 December 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2023	Full	Good
11/01/2023	Full	Good
07/12/2021	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive an exceptionally high standard of care from staff who know them well. Staff speak lovingly about children and are proud of children's achievements. There is a warm and homely atmosphere that gives children a sense of security and well-being. The sound of laughter between staff and children was heard throughout the inspection.

Thorough planning takes place in advance of children moving to the home to ensure that staff have the skills to meet the individual needs of children. Considerable thought is also given to the needs of children already living at the home to ensure that they are not negatively impacted. As a result, all children are settled and are supported to form relationships with their peers.

Children have extremely complex health needs and these are exceptionally well met. Since living at the home, children now attend all health appointments and reviews. As a result, the children have better informed healthcare, which has a substantial impact on the progress they are making. This has included significant improvements in children's mobility, following creative work from staff, and children who were previously peg fed now being able to eat from spoons and have a more varied diet. Staff's excellent understanding of children's health needs, and support for these, is making a considerable, positive difference to children's lives.

Children live in a homely environment, which is equipped with everything they need. The walls are filled with photographs of the children and their achievements. Children's artwork is creatively displayed for all to see, and their bedrooms reflect their personalities and interests. The garden has recently been renovated to provide a larger patio area. This will provide additional opportunities for children to spend time in the garden as a peer group and take part in group activities outside.

Children are making significant progress in their education. One child had been out of education for a significant period, due to health needs. When they were able to return, staff put in place a well-thought-out transition plan and this has helped them to re-engage successfully. Another child is waiting to start a specialist nursery provision. Staff have advocated for outreach sessions, which have greatly benefited their mobility skills and helped to prepare them to go to their new placement.

Children are supported to participate in an extensive variety of activities both inside and outside of the home. There are no barriers to the children exploring new activities in the wider community, including opportunities that children have not previously had. Children have enjoyed visits to an aquarium, pumpkin picking and theatre trips. Alongside this, they enjoy a wide range of arts, crafts and messy play. Birthdays are celebrated creatively, and staff help children to access innovative and immersive experiences. For an upcoming birthday, they have arranged an entertainer who specialises in animals, giant bubble making and fire breathing.

Children are supported to regularly see their families, and staff work closely with parents to ensure that they maintain a positive relationship. Parents and family members are welcomed into the home. One family member said, 'I feel so welcome when I come to visit my child; I am always made to feel at home.'

Staff know the children and their individual communication styles well. Through meaningful observations of children during activities, staff are able to effectively understand the micro expressions, movements and vocalisations made by the children. This helps staff to understand children's views and meet their needs in all areas of their lives.

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

The complexity of children's needs makes them highly vulnerable. These vulnerabilities are understood extremely well by staff, and the high quality of care means that children are kept safe. Staff are resourceful in ensuring that they understand the children's needs and risks. They research medical conditions, attend specialist training and have excellent working relationships with the professionals who are involved in the children's care.

The registered manager ensures that there are clear and individualised risk assessments in place for each child. The staff understand the strategies in them and implement them consistently. The manager has implemented effective systems to ensure that all staff members are kept up to date with the current needs of the children. As a result, children have their needs met consistently.

Staff are confident to share any practice issues with the management team, whether this be about their own practice or the practice of others. This helps to ensure that the safeguarding of the children is effective and consistently prioritised. When practice issues are identified, the management team takes immediate action to address them. This ensures that there is learning from any challenges and that staff practice is continually evolving and improving.

Staff respond extremely well to health emergencies. One child in the home has spent significant amounts of time in hospital due to their complex health needs. Managers ensured that this child was supported daily while in hospital, often having a member of staff with them for 24 hours a day to ensure that their needs were met. This meant that the child felt safe, loved and cared for at a distressing time in their life. Staff and managers also advocated on behalf of the child when medical professionals questioned their quality of life. This child's parent said, 'my child was never left on their own; this gave me great comfort as a parent.'

Leaders and managers ensure that they follow safer recruitment procedures. This ensures that staff are fully checked before they provide care to children. Staff's induction to the home is thorough, and a high level of support and training is provided due to the complex needs of the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager and deputy manager have high expectations of staff and consistently high aspirations for all of the children. They are ambitious, enthusiastic and experienced, and ensure that the home is managed efficiently and effectively. They lead the staff by example and ensure that there is a clear sense of purpose and direction.

Managers are highly visible and actively participate in the lives and care of the children. Their hands-on approach ensures that they are fully abreast with everything that is happening at the home. The staff feel supported, and managers ensure that children always receive high-quality care.

Managers operate an open-door policy. This allows staff to feel able to share any issues or concerns in a timely manner. Alongside this, staff receive high-quality, meaningful and regular supervision from the manager. Supervision sessions have a strong focus on outcomes for children. They are reflective and detailed, with clear actions set. Staff have high praise for the support and development they receive from the management team.

When staffing levels are not where they need to be, managers use agency staff to support the needs of the service and the children. When this is needed, managers ensure that the same workers are used and training is provided to them. Despite some staffing challenges, this means that children continue to receive consistent care by suitably skilled staff.

Many permanent staff have worked at the home for a significant period of time and there is a high number of qualified staff. Those who do not have the relevant qualification are completing this. Staff work collaboratively together and there is a culture of high support in the team. As a result, staff say they enjoy working in the home and the retention of staff is good.

The manager works closely with external professionals and children's family members. Professionals and family members speak highly of the manager and the positive impact that the care children receive has on their lives. One social worker said:

'They have an in-depth knowledge of the child I have there, and they [the child] have thrived in their environment. They offer them the consistent love, warmth and stability they need to be able to meet their milestones.'

The manager and team strongly advocate for children and challenge decisions when they fall short of meeting the children's needs. The management team is passionate about the lives and outcomes for the children. This is evident through their persistent challenge when advocating on behalf of the children.

Managers have excellent oversight of children's care. They consult with the families of children, social workers, independent reviewing officers, education and health professionals to review how they feel about how the needs of children are being met. They are open to and respond positively to the feedback they receive. The manager

makes effective use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The manager tackles weaknesses effectively to secure continuous improvement. This means that children continue to flourish as a result of the care they receive.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

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: SC483662

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Caretech community services limited

Registered provider address: Metropolitan House, 3 Darke Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Shelley Whiting

Registered manager: Sarah McConnell

Inspector

Kate Savage, Social Care Inspector

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