

SC370703

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by the local authority and provides care and support for up to twelve children who have an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis and/or learning disabilities. There are four apartments that are suitable for short- or long-term care.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2023

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/11/2019	Full	Good
05/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff build warm and trusting relationships with children. The children happily return to the home after school and are keen to let staff know how their day has been. Staff provide hugs and affection to the children who want this and can tolerate it. The environment is warm and nurturing and children are supported to relax.

There are excellent relationships between staff and a wide range of professionals. Staff work in partnership with the teams around the children to understand and meet their needs. The child is at the centre of all the work that staff do and, as a result, progress is consistent.

Parents are kept well informed of the progress and development of their child. Changes in their needs or behaviours are quickly shared and plans put in place to manage these. Review meetings ensure that everyone knows the next steps.

Staff ensure that they make health appointments, and they support children to attend. There is a strong commitment to offering a healthy and varied diet. Staff support children to make healthy meal choices and to understand the impact diet has on their well-being. For example, the recent provision of air fryers promote healthier meal preparation. Children are encouraged to help themselves to the fresh fruit and vegetables available for snacks. A good medication procedure is in place to ensure that children receive medication that is prescribed only for them. Staff do not administer medication until they are assessed as competent to do so.

Staff have regular 'wishes and feelings sessions' with children. They support children to express their views through various modes of communication. As a result, a child was able to express how they felt about sharing a space with another child and action was taken to address their worries. Staff support children to see their families regularly. One child said that they wanted more time with their family, and staff arranged additional video sessions for them. Staff recognise the importance of children's links with the wider community. For example, children access fun events, such as visits to the local aerodrome.

The children enjoy a varied range of activities and have good experiences. Staff provide outings and activities that help to create lasting memories for children. Children have holidays abroad, and these are carefully planned to ensure that children are safe and have a positive experience. Staff support children to explore their individual interests, such as hot-air balloons and aeroplanes.

There has been a stable group of children living at the home for some time. When children move on, staff prepare them well. They work closely with parents and those at their new home to ensure a positive move. When possible, staff complete shifts at the child's new home to help them to settle. They also complete social stories to

help children understand the moving process. Staff maintain contact with children when they move on to reassure them that they are not forgotten.

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

Staff know the safety needs of children and respond to them effectively. Staff review risk management strategies at appropriate intervals. This ensures that the most up-to-date information is available and evaluated. Staff provide copies of these strategies and plans to social workers and parents to make them aware of how risk is being managed and reviewed.

Children do not go missing from this home. Staff provide close supervision to ensure that they are safe. However, staff complete a missing person profile for each child to ensure that their needs and requirements are known should they go missing. Child exploitation risk assessments are also completed. Staff recognise that all their children are vulnerable to this and work to prevent exposure to such risks.

The plans in place to manage behaviour are tailored to each child. Staff receive training in positive behaviour management. Consistent boundaries are in place to ensure that children know what staff expect of them. Staff use social stories to help children understand expectations of their behaviour. Some children have behaviours that challenge, and staff always use de-escalation techniques in the first instance. When staff do have to use physical intervention, this involves the use of light holds or guiding the child away from a situation to ensure their safety and that of others. The focus is around understanding the behaviour and managing it positively.

Good safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect children. Staff understand the processes for the management of allegations and know how to report concerns about a child. Notifications to Ofsted are timely, and the home provides updates.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since January 2023. She has submitted her application for registration with Ofsted. She has been an employee at this home for many years and knows it well.

Leaders and managers have high expectations for what children can achieve. They promote a good standard of care and support to ensure that children make progress. There is a clear focus on improving the experiences and environment for the children. Additionally, the manager models how to build relationships with children. A strong monitoring process is followed that ensures that the quality of care is consistent and maintained.

Leaders and managers take effective action when responses from other services are unsatisfactory. They promote education for all and advocate strongly for school places for all the children in their care. Leaders and managers have strong working relationships with other professionals to ensure the best possible all-round care for the children.

Leaders and managers provide staff with good-quality training. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. However, staff reported not feeling supported following difficult and challenging incidents with children. There has been a period of instability with significant changes in management arrangements. In addition to this, there has been high staff turnover. This has put pressure on existing staff. As a result, morale has been low. Leaders and managers had not identified the extent of this. When brought to their attention during this inspection, they took immediate steps to address the issue. For example, they will now be offering clinical supervision from an external provider. Additionally, staff will have access to a range of other meetings to support and strengthen them individually and as a team.

Leaders and managers have taken actions to address their identified areas for development. Because of this, a new process is in place to improve the way that they recruit staff. Additionally, they aim to have a higher percentage of permanent staff. This will reduce their dependence on agency staff and is designed to attract only the best and most suitable people to the work at the home.

Safer recruitment practices are strong, which helps to prevent the recruitment of unsuitable people.

Leaders and managers ensure that the home meets its stated aims and objectives. They recognise when they need to make changes to accommodate a child safely, such as accommodating a child on their own while ensuring that they are not isolated and have access to their peers and social activities.

Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity. This is evident throughout the home. The staff team is diverse and reflects the diversity of the children that use the service. There is a culture of equality for all, including the children.

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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(x))</p>	<p>20 May 2023</p>

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: SC370703

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Allison Wykes

Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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