

SC429748

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company. It provides care for up to four children who have experienced trauma that has left them vulnerable.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2011.

**Visit dates:** 8 to 9 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 17 December 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

## **The care of children**

There are currently three children living at the home. The staff have established close and trusting relationships with the children. This has enabled the children to feel safe and happy in the staff's care. The children said that they benefit from the diverse staff team. They can talk to the staff about different issues and they feel listened to and supported.

During the COVID-19 national lockdown, the children thoroughly enjoyed spending time at the home. The manager bought additional resources that reflected the children's interests, such as gymnasium equipment and arts and crafts. The staff were creative in planning daily exercise such as walking, cycling and scooter rides. This ensured that the children experienced a variety of healthy activities.

The staff continue to ensure that the children's individual health needs are met. They support the children to access health appointments online. The staff enabled one child to carry on attending a girl's group online. This has promoted the child's mental health and well-being.

The staff work closely with the children's schools to understand how best to support their learning. Consequently, the children's school attendance is excellent, and they are all making good progress.

The staff recognise the importance of maintaining family contact for the children. They work hard to build positive relationships with the children's families. The staff regularly travel with the children and plan creative and thoughtful activities that the children can do with their families. This enables the children to create positive family memories and a strong sense of identity.

The staff are sensitive to the children's wishes and feelings. They offer regular opportunities for the children to participate in decisions about the running of the home. This is most noticeable in children's bedrooms, which reflect their individual personalities and preferences.

The home is well decorated and comfortable. The homely interior design supports the children to feel valued. This is most evident in pictures of the children in the communal areas of the home. These pictures highlight enjoyable times that the children have spent together.

## **The safety of children**

The staff know the children well. Together with the manager, the staff have developed high-quality individual risk assessments. These contain clear guidance on how to manage the children's individual risks effectively. In addition, the manager has ensured that specialist therapeutic guidance is incorporated into the risk-reduction strategies. This has meant that there are very few serious incidents at the home.

The staff communicate effectively with each other. They share information and have built a strong teamwork ethic. This enables the staff to model positive social behaviours to the children. The staff have been effective in encouraging the children to develop positive relationships with one another. This has created a secure and nurturing environment in which the children thrive.

The staff rarely use sanctions. When these are used, they are proportionate and involve the staff spending time with the children to reflect and consider the impact of their actions on others. However, the sanctions are not always fully recorded in the children's records. Furthermore, some records, such as measures of control, are illegible. This makes effective monitoring difficult.

### **Leaders and managers**

The manager has worked at the home since 2011. She is committed to ensuring that the children's individual needs are at the forefront of her practice. She is a strong advocate for the children and strives to help them to develop resilience and independence. She does this by working closely with professionals and organisations in the community. As a result, the children are achieving positive outcomes in all aspects of their development.

The feedback from the children's parents and social workers is very positive. They can see the difference that living at the home has made and how confident the children have become.

The manager inspires the staff through leading by example. She is available to guide the staff when needed. Consequently, the staff feel supported. The manager's guidance has created a stable permanent staff team that provides consistent care.

The manager has provided a timely response to complaints. She has worked collaboratively with the children to address a community concern. She did this through taking a restorative approach with the children to enable them to reflect on their actions and think together about how this can inform practice at the home.

The manager scrutinises the records of all incidents. She has oversight of the daily log and ensures that she is involved in the daily staff handover meetings. This enables the manager to have clear oversight of the quality of care and experiences of the children. She uses the monthly independent visitor's reports to guide changes in practice. The manager is, therefore, aware of the areas for development and actively works on plans for continual improvement of the home.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** SC429748

**Registered provider:** The Ryes College Limited

**Registered provider address:** 3 Skyview Business Centre, 9 Church Field Road, Sudbury CO10 2YA

**Responsible individual:** Jaya Wright

**Registered manager:** Vivienne Toms

### **Inspector**

Leemya McKeown, Social Care Inspector

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