

SC062309

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to six children who may have physical and learning disabilities. This includes one place provided for short-break services. At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2014.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 July 2023

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: 9 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/11/2022	Full	Good
17/11/2021	Full	Good
13/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
16/10/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who live in this home have complex health needs, which are met with individualised and personalised care, specifically tailored to robustly support them. As a result of this attentive approach, these children are making noteworthy progress from their respective starting points.

The home is maintained to an excellent standard. Children have access to a wide range of toys and play equipment. Bedroom furnishings and decoration are carefully planned around children's individual needs. This includes bespoke beds that minimise the need for staff to move children unnecessarily. As a result, the home environment is nurturing and safe.

Staff are resourceful and creative. They have developed imaginative, sensory-based activities to engage and stimulate children. They actively seek opportunities for children to engage in important childhood activities, such as reading stories, playing games and sensory play. However, they do not always capture these important experiences in the children's memory books.

Staff support children to move out of the home with meticulous planning. The new carers receive training from the home's practice educator to meet children's complex health needs, and this significantly enhances children's experiences. A parent said, 'When [name of child] moved out from this home it was so well planned. Staff have stayed in touch, which he loves.'

There are excellent working relationships between staff and families. Some children have lived in the home for several years. Children have formed very positive attachments to staff. These strong attachments enhance children's self-esteem and support their personal development. One parent said, 'It doesn't bear thinking about where I would be without this service.'

There is a committed and skilled team of staff who understand children's needs extremely well. This helps children grow in confidence and develop as independent individuals. Staff sensitively support children to be active members of their communities. Examples include children taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and going to Brownies. This builds children's self-esteem, helps them to make positive contributions and enhances their opportunities.

All children attend school regularly. Staff accompany all the children to school. This provides children with consistency of care while school staff learn how to meet children's health needs. Staff support children to achieve their educational goals. For instance, a child is currently learning Makaton. The staff create a positive learning environment. As a result, the child's communication skills and social interactions are noticeably improving.

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

Staff receive comprehensive training, supervised by a nurse practice educator, to help them to manage children's complex health needs effectively. Their competency is assessed at each training stage, ensuring that they can safely handle tasks like tracheostomy care, which they do only after demonstrating proficiency.

Staff are very attentive to children's needs, closely monitoring even subtle changes in their condition that could indicate health deterioration. The home's practice educator praised the staff's proactive approach in seeking and acting on support and advice, fostering excellent communication between teams.

Children's care plans are exceptionally well written, ensuring that staff have a thorough understanding of each child's preferences, health, routines, personal care needs and communication methods. There is extensive evidence of children's specific communication systems being used very effectively in and around the home. A teacher highlighted how the staff mirror interventions used in school, supporting the children's communication progression.

The home maintains comprehensive risk assessments concerning health, and staff are well informed about children's health requirements, managing associated risks effectively. However, the manager has not reviewed the necessity of rodent deterrent boxes in the home, since there have been no reports or concerns regarding rodents for an extended period of time.

Staff undertake a broad range of good-quality training in safeguarding matters. Safeguarding themes are further explored with staff through supervision and in team meetings. As a result, staff know how to recognise, report and act on any safeguarding concerns that they may have.

Suitable background checks are completed before any staff start work at the home. This ensures that children are not placed at risk from inappropriate adults caring for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is qualified, confident and exceptionally competent, and is supported by a very experienced deputy manager. They cultivate a culture of strong ambition for children and hold high expectations for staff. Staff and managers advocate exceptionally well for the children. This is evidenced by the children's full attendance at school, which is only possible due to the unwavering support from the home's staff.

Children's progress is linked to their individual targets, which involve their parents and professionals. The manager and her team are central to that process, ensuring that information is shared with other relevant people. This supports the managers in knowing the progress that children are making, while the children develop confidence and self-esteem.

Leaders and managers foster a supportive and helpful environment for staff, providing regular supervision and holding team meetings, which are well attended. New staff receive a comprehensive induction, including guidance from experienced colleagues, and have additional support during their probation period, so that they have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Staff morale is high. Staff say that they are well led by the manager and that they receive very good support. Staff say that their training helps them to meet the needs of children. The manager ensures that staff feel valued and she encourages them to develop their skills through additional learning. As a result, staff are confident and knowledgeable.

The manager is a good advocate for children. She is confident to challenge placing authorities and professionals in order to ensure that children have access to the support and services they require.

Managers conduct annual appraisals with staff, during which staff members reflect on their work and establish targets for the upcoming year. However, these appraisals do not take into account the perspectives of children or other essential individuals. This could limit the managers' understanding of the children's experiences.

Managers understand the home's strengths and areas for improvement. They have implemented systems to improve their oversight through regular auditing and evaluation. This is improving practice in several areas and means that staff provide better care for children. The manager has met the requirements made at the last inspection.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home adheres to applicable health and safety regulations. Specifically, they should consider whether rodent deterrents are necessary, provided that there are no concerns about rodents. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a homely atmosphere rather than an institutional one. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisals include the views of other professionals who have worked with staff over the year and the views of children who have been cared for at the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure staff capture the positive achievements that children make. This will assist in documenting significant life events for children while they are living in the home, including capturing memories in the children's journey books. Recording positive achievements in a journey book will help children to understanding their progress from their initial starting points. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: SC062309

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Registered provider address: 3 Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park,
Coventry CV3 4FJ

Responsible individual: Deborah Hurley

Registered manager: Gemma Ferris

Inspector

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

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