

SC396813

Registered provider: Chailey Heritage Foundation

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a charity. It provides care for up to 27 children with profound physical disabilities, sensory impairments and complex medical needs who may also have learning disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 21 children were staying across the three bungalows. This includes children who live at the home long term, and those who attend for weekly boarding and short breaks.

A non-maintained special school is also on site, catering for children and young people aged three to 19 years. Adults receive residential care in Care Quality Commission registered homes on the same site. A team of nurses, therapists and specialists, provided by Sussex Community Foundation Trust, is also based on site and provides medical support. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this setting.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2023.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 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: 30 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2022	Full	Good
21/09/2021	Full	Good
13/08/2019	Full	Good
30/10/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by staff who are attentive and familiar with each child's personality, needs and method of communication. As a result, children build and maintain strong relationships with staff, and staff demonstrate genuine commitment to making sure that children have positive experiences.

Children make good progress from their starting points. Staff are adept at noticing and rewarding when children achieve something that may seem small but is significant for them. Meaningful joint-working between the care, health and education teams provides an effective wraparound service and ensures that there is a shared understanding of the goals that are important to children.

Staff understand the importance of predictable routines for children. Children are supported to engage in education and participate in the wide range of activities that are planned around the education timetable. Staff are creative and make sure that children have new experiences to expand their interests and learning, while also making sure that they have access to activities that they find comforting and enjoyable.

Children's independence is fully promoted, and staff are committed to helping children to live as independently as possible. Teaching practical skills to children is embedded into practice. Staff understand that life skills such as making choices and managing social situations are just as important as practical skills. Staff speak with pride when they describe the progress that the children have made.

The processes that are followed when children move into and out of the home are thorough and thoughtful. Managers work closely with children's families and with other professionals to create plans to ensure that children have the support they need. This approach creates the best opportunity for moves to go smoothly.

Proactive steps are taken to work closely with people important to children. Visits from families are welcomed. When visits are not possible, staff help children to stay in touch with their families by arranging virtual meetings. One child's mother told inspectors that 'communication is great'. She went on to describe how much she appreciates the written daily updates she receives about her child's experiences and progress.

Overall, children's care is well planned and highly individualised. CCTV and other monitoring devices are sometimes used to ensure children's safety and well-being. Staff are aware of the intrusive nature of CCTV and are mindful about its use. The initial assessment of why CCTV is required is well considered. However, records do not demonstrate that the use of CCTV and other monitoring equipment is kept under regular review after the original decision has been made. Not all children's plans contain details about why surveillance continues to be necessary or that their

parents and placing authorities continue to agree to its use. Additionally, the CCTV policy does not provide clarity about how staff should balance using the equipment with maintaining children's privacy and dignity. Managers are aware of these shortfalls and a review of the use of surveillance is already underway.

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

Staff have a sound understanding of each child's strengths and vulnerabilities. They provide nurturing care to ensure children's safety and well-being. This is balanced with giving children freedom and choice to take well-considered risks and enjoy their time at the home.

There are effective and organised medication processes in place to ensure that children receive their medication in a safe manner. Staff competency is checked regularly to ensure that practice is safe and consistent.

Risk management is sound, and staff understand the necessary support and safety measures to protect children from harm. Comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessments take place when children need specialist equipment to keep them safe. Some equipment restricts children's movement but not all plans demonstrate that the use of this equipment is kept under close review. Inspectors did not identify any situations where this is having a negative impact on the quality of care or progress and experiences of children, but reviewing processes are not sufficient to underpin good practice.

Staff are adept at quickly noticing changes in children's presentation and behaviour. They recognise that those changes may indicate that children are struggling and need additional support. Consequently, the use of physical restraint is minimised.

Managers recognise the importance of learning from safeguarding incidents and complaints. They carry out thorough investigations, involving external safeguarding professionals when necessary. They ensure that any learning from incidents is shared with the wider staff team. This responsive approach reduces the risk that potentially harmful situations will reoccur.

Staff are vetted before working at the home. However, staff recruitment files do not fully demonstrate safer recruitment practice. For example, managers do not explore candidates' reasons for leaving all previous positions involving work with children and vulnerable adults. This removes an important level of scrutiny about staff conduct and performance. Additionally, managers do not ensure that all recruitment agencies consistently apply all elements of safer recruitment practice.

Processes for managing health and safety matters have improved. As a result, staff understand their roles and responsibilities and the physical environment is safe and secure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The responsible individual has been proactive in reducing the impact on children by making sure that management arrangements are sufficient to monitor the quality of care being provided.

The house managers are trusted figures for the children and for the staff. They are clear about the progress that children are making, and they have high aspirations for what children can achieve. Staff speak highly of the support that they receive from the house managers.

Staff receive good-quality training that is relevant to the needs of the children they are looking after. However, there are shortfalls in the systems for recording attendance at staff training and progress towards achieving the necessary qualifications as required by the Children's Homes Regulations (2015). As a result, good practice in relation to staff training is undermined by incomplete records. Managers have recognised this and are taking steps to improve practice.

Most permanent staff receive supervision at the agreed intervals, but this is not the case for many agency staff. As a result, some agency staff do not have protected time with managers to discuss the work that they do and the impact that this has on children's progress, safety and well-being.

The introduction of a 'quality team' has enhanced management monitoring and oversight of the home. However, written care and support plans are not routinely updated. As a result, they do not reliably inform staff about how to care for children and keep them safe. In practice, this is predominantly a recording shortfall, as staff know the children well and provide safe care.

Staff and managers make every effort to involve children in care-planning decisions and decisions about the way the home is run. Working closely with external professionals is given high priority. Other professionals who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were unanimous in the view that children benefit from good-quality care and effective joint-working.

The responsible individual is well informed regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He welcomes feedback from external sources. He sees criticisms and comments about the service as an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve and this is evident in practice.

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
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p>	31 December 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	31 December 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home, and any modifications to the environment of the home, are only made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the written policy about the use of CCTV and other monitoring equipment describes how this will support the safeguarding and well-being of those living and working in the home in accordance with regulation 24. The home must gain consent to any monitoring or surveillance from the placing authority in writing at the time of placement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)
- The registered person should ensure that records demonstrate that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

- The registered person should ensure that case records are kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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: SC396813

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Chailey Heritage Foundation

Responsible individual: Gareth Germer

Registered manager: Maria Carter

Inspectors

Helen Simmons, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager
Matt Hedges, Senior His Majesty's Inspector, Social Care

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