

# SC032154

Registered provider: The National Autistic Society

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is part of a charitable trust, and it provides care for up to eight children who may have autism spectrum disorder. Children may have other associated difficulties, such as sensory impairment and physical disabilities.

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

The home is divided into two houses, with a communal hub and garden. Children who live in the home also attend the school that is in the same grounds.

### Inspection dates: 12 and 13 February 2024

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>good</b>
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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:** 22 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2023	Full	Good
08/11/2022	Full	Inadequate
22/03/2022	Full	Outstanding
21/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

All the children attend education and make progress from their starting points. For children who have barriers to learning, the registered manager advocates strongly on their behalf. This not only ensures that the children receive the support that they require, but this has also resulted in one child being educated in a smaller classroom.

Staff support the children with their health needs. All children are registered with all healthcare providers, and they attend their appointments. The staff prepare the children before any appointment through one-to-one sessions. This helps to reduce the children's anxieties as they know what to expect and do not feel scared.

Children enjoy their experiences of living in the home. Staff understand the children's complex needs, and they consider these fully when they are planning the children's daily activities. This gives the children the opportunity to explore and enjoy their environment safely.

Staff understand that each child's communication need is different. Staff talk to and engage with the children so that the children's wishes and feelings are understood. The staff support the children to express their choices in food and have a voice in what activities they want to do. As a result, the children eat the foods that they like and enjoy a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.

Staff are creative in their practice to get the best outcomes for children. The staff learn, reflect and adapt their practice when children's progress is stifled. Staff work together to implement new strategies to better support the children. They are very attentive and engage with the children. The use of social stories has helped one child to understand that they do not get a toy after every activity.

Children's individual needs are considered well when they move into the home. Decisions around the children who move into the home are considered alongside their risks and vulnerabilities. This thorough planning enables the child's transition to be smooth. Children and their parents or carers have a personalised introduction to the home. This involves home visits, school visits and tea visits. These opportunities help everyone to become familiar with the staff and the home environment.

The home offers the children a large environment for them to explore and have space for themselves. The home is clean and tidy and has books and games available for the children to use. Each child's bedroom is how they want it to be and houses their belongings. This gives them a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, a child's bathroom floor had dirt in the corners, and water damage to the floor had caused the flooring to lift in parts. Furthermore, the cupboard that surrounds the sink appeared worn. The registered manager acted without delay and reported this to the maintenance team.

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

The high level of staff supervision provided to the children ensures that they are kept safe. Staff understand the children and the impact of their behaviours on others. This understanding ensures that potential risks and children's risks are reduced.

All the children's parents said that their children are kept safe. The children's risk assessments provide a clear overview of all their identified needs and their behaviours. As a result, the staff can prevent or manage risks when they occur. Furthermore, the children's behaviour management plans identify the different strategies that the staff should use to manage the children's presenting behaviours.

Staff use communication materials to help the children understand their risk-taking behaviours. Individual sessions are repeated to children to reinforce these important messages. Consequently, there have not been any physical interventions since the last inspection.

The children's personal care is carried out respectfully so the children's dignity is maintained. The staff actively engage and talk to the children when they are delivering any form of care. This provides the children with clear reasoning, reassurance and the opportunity for them to take control. Importantly, the staff have a good understanding about safeguarding, which means that they record any marks or bruises on the children clearly and transparently. This practice enables further investigation and protection for all children.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager continues to embed a culture of high aspirations for both the children and staff. The manager is experienced in her role, and she continues to be supported well by a deputy manager who shares her ethos. Together, they have a hands-on approach and lead by example. This way of working ensures that the staff are consistent in their practice and encourages the nurturing ethos that prevails throughout the home.

The registered manager and deputy manager work closely together to make sure that children receive a consistent approach in the home. They have an excellent understanding of the children's needs, and they share their knowledge with the staff. They create a low-stress, high-nurturing and supportive environment that enables the children to make good progress both socially and academically.

The registered manager is ambitious and has high expectations of the staff. She will challenge staff constructively when their practice requires this. This is to ensure that good practice is being delivered to the children. Importantly, the registered manager learns from incidents and implements guidance for the staff when needed.

The staff feel that they are supported in their role by their managers. Leaders and managers provide routine practice direction and guidance to the staff through regular team meetings and reflective supervision sessions. This in turn helps the staff to develop in their role.

Staff have received the provider's mandatory training, such as training on first aid, physical intervention, safeguarding and autism spectrum disorder. However, the staff have not been afforded the opportunity to complete specialist training to meet some of the children's individual needs. Consequently, the staff are not aware of the up-to-date approach that they should consider when they provide care for children who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The independent visitor makes monthly visits to the home. They document the progress of the children. However, the independent visitor does not provide sufficient scrutiny when children use self-injurious behaviour. This does not provide those who read these documents with sufficient oversight on how staff manage these particular incidents.

## 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach; and</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p>	13 March 2024

### Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home to ensure continuous improvement. These compiled external monitoring reports should include consultation and an evaluation of staff practice to enable the independent person to form their opinion as to whether children are safeguarded and their welfare is met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that children's bathrooms and floors are thoroughly cleaned, and that where there are visible signs of wear and tear, such as on floors and bathroom cupboards, these are repaired as soon as possible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.9)

## **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:** SC032154

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** The National Autistic Society

**Registered provider address:** 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG

**Responsible individual:** Post vacant

**Registered manager:** Emma Knott

## Inspectors

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

Janine Shortman-Thomas, Social Care Inspector Manager



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