

SC020151

Registered provider: Country Care Childrens Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children who may have social and emotional difficulties. Children live across two homes. One is a large farmhouse in a rural location and the other is in a local town. This home has a school attached. The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2020.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

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: 29 June 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/06/2022	Full	Outstanding
12/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
10/12/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
25/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Staff build caring, nurturing and trusting relationships with children which help them make progress in different areas of their lives.

Children have made good progress in their education. Some children attend external provisions and others attend the onsite school. One child who moved to the home having missed significant amounts of education has now gained qualifications in English and Maths and has successfully applied for a college place. Staff have good links with children's schools. This ensures that when any challenges do arise for children in school, staff work closely with both the school staff and the child to address these.

Staff work closely with the therapist and psychologist who are attached to the home to consider children's needs from a therapeutic perspective. This helps staff have a clear understanding of children's previous experiences and the affect they have on children's needs. This clear understanding of children's experiences help staff build more trusting relationships with children, who have often found it difficult to trust adults in their lives.

Staff warmly welcome children to the home. Some children have moved to the home after significant and traumatic events in their lives. However, staff have worked hard to help them feel comfortable and safe. One child's social worker said that staff, 'Welcomed her wonderfully and took her into their family'. In addition, when children move on staff work hard to help prepare them for this. An understanding of the importance of independence work, helps ensure children are well prepared moving on.

Staff help children develop and strengthen relationships with their families. One child was recently able to go home for Christmas for the first time in several years. Staff supported this and this support for the relationship has recently led to a significant reduction in the amount of supervision which is needed when the child sees their family. Another child has recently been able to have a sibling stay at the home overnight. Careful support and planning went into helping the child get to a point that they were comfortable with this happening.

The quality-of-care planning for children is mixed. Some children have clear and detailed plans as to how staff ensure their needs are met. However, for one child, their placement plan was not reviewed for a significant period. Information in it from the child's social worker was not all gained until several months after they moved to the home. In addition, the child's local authority care plan had not been used to inform the placement plan. This means that staff have not always had the most up to date information needed to ensure all the child's needs are being met.

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

Children have moved to the home at times when they have been subject to significant risks. Staff have a good understanding of these risks and there are clear plans to support staff to manage them. Staff work effectively with children and the wider professional network to help children become safer.

For some children there have been significant community-based risks. Staff work closely with the professional networks around children to help manage these effectively. This has been done in a way which has still allowed children a suitable level of freedom, whilst ensuring there are clear plans to manage this. Social workers said that children have become significantly safer as a direct result of the care provided by staff.

There have been some incidents of children going missing. Staff work in line with children's plans to manage these. Staff are proactive in looking for and trying to contact children when they have been missing. One child was surprised at the effort staff went to find them, saying that no one had done this for them previously. This has helped build trust with the child and show them that staff care for them.

Some children have been involved in incidents of self-harming. Staff respond to children with great care and nurture at such times. They show curiosity as to what has led to the incident for the child and as to how they can help them manage how they are feeling in other ways. This helps children feel safe and cared for.

Some children take regular medication. In one incident, staff administered a child with the wrong medication. This resulted in the child being admitted to hospital overnight. This was an isolated incident, however, systems for the administration of medication could have been more robust, and this could have prevented the incident. The manager took immediate actions to improve the system and is arranging additional medication training.

Behavioural incidents are rare. This demonstrates that children feel settled. When they do occur staff generally deal with them well. However, following one incident between two children records were unclear as to what actions had been taken in response to it. While staff managed it appropriately at the time, this failed to ensure that managers had clarity as to what further actions were taken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is highly experienced and has high expectations for the quality of care that is provided to children. Managers are open to feedback about the home and respond appropriately to it. They use feedback to identify and make improvements in the care provided to children. Managers started to take steps during the inspection to address all the shortfalls raised.

There is a good range of training for staff. The manager and responsible individual have recently been trained in delivering physical intervention and de-escalation

training. This is benefitting the staff as the training is now more tailored to their specific needs and the needs of children at the home.

Managers build effective relationships with external professionals. Feedback from others was unanimously positive, with all saying that communication is excellent and that managers are open to learning. Regular meetings about individual children take place with their social workers, education staff, the home's therapeutic team and managers. This helps ensure good oversight of children's care and the progress that they are making.

Staff said they feel well supported by managers. They said that managers are approachable and available to them when they need support. Staff said they value supervision and find it beneficial in terms of helping their practice. However, managers have not ensured that staff are supervised in line with the home's policy, with some staff going significant amounts of time between supervision. While there are other methods of support in place, this has meant that at times staff have lacked the individualised support that supervision provides.

Managers have some systems to gain children's views. However, these are limited, and children's views have not always been captured on a regular basis. The manager has identified improvements which are needed in this area, but these are not yet in place.

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 registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b))</p>	04 March 2024
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, that children's placement plans are regularly reviewed and updated, include all relevant information about children's needs and are informed by children's local authority care plans.</p>	08 April 2024
<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>	08 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person should ensure that children are supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. In particular, ensure actions taken in response to incidents between children are clearly recorded. (Guide to the

Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 39, paragraph 8.11)

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: SC020151

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Country Care Childrens Homes Ltd

Responsible individual: Rachel Dowle

Registered manager: Jason Sellars

Inspector

Joe Matkar-Cox, social care inspector

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