

SC037441

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to four children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The manager has been in post since April 2024. They registered in April 2025.

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

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 9 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/04/2024	Full	Outstanding
07/08/2023	Full	Good
28/06/2022	Full	Outstanding
27/04/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive care from supportive and capable staff who know them well. The staff show great commitment to providing the best possible care. They recognise the individuality of each child and support their uniqueness. Because of this, children make exceptional progress.

The children have made significant progress in all areas of their lives. This is because of the strong and effective working relationships between the staff and a range of professionals. The staff have a good understanding of the needs of each child. They understand the importance of good professional relationships to enable good outcomes for the children. The staff receive specialist training to enable them to expertly meet the individual needs of all children. For example, they have received training to ensure that they know how to care for children with epilepsy and pica (eating disorder). This is to ensure that they know how to respond and keep the children safe.

The staff develop close supportive relationships with the children and show great patience with them. As a result, the children trust them. The skilled and intensive support of staff has helped one child to better manage their emotions. This child has learned to communicate their needs, enabling an improved experience of living here. There has been a significant decrease in incidents of the child becoming upset to the extent that they posed a risk of harm to themselves or others. Consequently, this child is now much more settled. The staff use communication aids and resources that enable the children to make choices and to express their needs, feelings and emotions in a positive way.

The staff understand the importance of education. All the children are accessing education and making excellent progress in school. The regular communication between the home and school ensures that children's experiences are well understood and that staff can respond effectively to support them. The staff observe children in school twice a year and, for one child, invited school staff to visit the home so that they could develop a shared understanding of how to best support the child and ensure that they have a consistent experience of care in the home and at school. This helped overcome some difficulties that the child was facing at school and helped them to settle and enjoy their time in education.

The children benefit from exceptionally effective help to promote their social and emotional well-being. The staff provide children with experiences and activities that they would not otherwise access. For example, the staff have taken one child out to dinner with two other children. This is an experience that the child would not have been able to tolerate before. Another child has had a spa day with their key worker, and plans are in place for a repeat of this. A significant strength of the home is its commitment to documenting children's experiences. Staff take photos and share these with relevant people in the child's network.

The staff understand the importance of hearing children's voices. They provide children with a range of opportunities to express their views and wishes. The staff support children to make choices and use social stories to help this process. This creates an environment where children feel respected and valued.

There is a significant commitment to providing children with life skills. The preparation for independence is both highly valued and highly effective. The staff have supported one child to use public transport, which they now manage independently to go to college. Another child has started to dress themselves and has shown that they are pleased with this. Their response being, 'Ta-da!'.

The staff value family time. They ensure that children continue to see the people who are important to them in a meaningful way. There are strong relationships between staff and families. One parent commented that her child is now doing things that he would never have been able to do before. Another said of the staff, 'They are just fantastic, so caring and accommodating. We don't know where they would be without them. They don't just look after him; they do their best to help him grow and flourish.'

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

The staff know how to keep the children safe and apply this knowledge well. There is a strong commitment to children's safety, which is central to staff practice. The staff understand how to raise concerns and manage safeguarding incidents well. Managers have excellent oversight of all incidents of concern. They have built, and continue to promote, a positive safeguarding culture in the home.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the children and are aware of their vulnerabilities. Children understand that staff are looking out for them, and this helps them to feel safe. The safety plans that underpin excellent care practice are of a high standard. Staff consistently apply these plans to help children to become safer.

The staff manage the health of children exceptionally well. They understand the complexity of these needs and work with a range of professionals to ensure that they are met. The staff have good relationships with children's parents. They keep them informed of any health-related concerns. Some children need emergency medication. The staff take an emergency grab bag with them when taking the children out. Staff are well trained to administer medications, and clear risk assessments are in place to plan for all eventualities.

The staff receive training in behaviour management that supports them well to help keep children safe and to promote good behaviour. They work well with the children and are extremely patient with them. Excellent interaction was observed between staff and a young person. The interaction required great skill and understanding. The staff encourage positive behaviour and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Safe recruitment practices are in place. They are understood and applied well. This ensures that only appropriately vetted individuals work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is ambitious for what the children can achieve and ensures a high standard of care. They have created an environment in the home that is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. They have supported and invested in staff to create a team of staff who have the experience, skills and knowledge to consistently deliver high standards of care and exceptional outcomes for children.

The manager has strong processes in place to monitor care practice. He regularly audits children's and staff files and ensures records and plans are clear, relevant and concise. The manager is acutely aware of the progress that the children make and works with the staff team to lead and promote a culture of high aspiration and positivity. For example, he shares slide shows about the children with the team, professionals and families to highlight their progress and to celebrate their achievements.

An additional strength is the manager's ability to advocate for children. He is confident in challenging services to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of care planning. For example, he is currently advocating effectively to ensure appropriate alternative education for a child who needs additional support while the local authority identifies a secondary school that can best meet the child's needs.

Leaders and managers provide a strong, reflective and learning culture at the home. This enables the staff to feel well supported and valued. The staff receive regular supervision that is reflective and provides them space to be thoughtful and well informed in their approach to caring for children. An excellent training offer is in place. This develops the skills and knowledge of the staff to meet the needs of children. Staff also do training to help them work ethically with each other. For example, they receive training about dignity and respect for team members. This helps them model strong ethical values for children.

Complaints are few. However, they are well managed. The manager is thorough in the process of review and investigation. The manager knows the areas of strength of the home and identifies areas to further enhance and develop the service.

Excellent professional relationships are in place. Professionals speak positively about this. They say that communication is excellent. One professional said, 'He [the manager] is very willing to work collaboratively with parents and professionals.' Another said, 'They are strong advocates [for children].'

There is a very strong commitment to inclusion. Leaders, managers and staff work to ensure that all the children can access the activities that their peers access. Children are also supported to be involved in the local authority's corporate parenting board. This gives them the opportunity to share their views and experience of care to inform and develop local authority practice. This is a positive feature of a service that promotes an open culture and values the contribution that children can make to help shape their experiences of care.

No requirements or recommendations were made as a result of this inspection.

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: SC037441

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Sussex County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RG

Responsible individual: Hayley Grover

Registered manager: Benjamin Arnold

Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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