

2716876

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to five children aged between eight and 18 who experience social and emotional difficulties. There were four children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Children refer to staff caring for them as 'adults' and so they are referred to as such throughout this report.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2023.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are flourishing because adults provide them with empathetic, loving and sensitive care. Children talk extremely positively about their relationships with adults and speak highly of the care that they receive. One child said that they think the care is outstanding.

Children have access to a wide range of activities that help to improve their social and emotional development. Children enjoy riding bicycles, caring for the home's chickens, watching films in the cinema room, having friends to visit and occasional sleepovers. Children also participate in regular activities outside the home, such as Brownies, gymnastics and boxing. Special occasions are celebrated with flair.

Children's health and education outcomes improve because of the well-planned care that they receive. The independent reviewing officer for one child described a child as 'thriving' and said that adults are focused on the child's individual needs. They said, 'I have observed an increase in the child's resilience and confidence.'

A particular strength at the home is the adults' commitment to supporting children to be as independent as possible. Adults make the most of all opportunities to help children to learn new skills and prepare for their future. Adults make sure that they notice achievements which may seem small, but which are real progress for children. This gives children the confidence to work hard to achieve goals which are important to them.

Children's voices are central to all decisions about their care and the way the home is run. This makes children feel confident that their views are important to adults. One child's social worker said:

'I have witnessed the adults advocate for the young people they care for and show patience, respect and good humour. There is a strong sense of belonging and each child is made to feel valued and listened to'.

Children are supported to maintain positive links with their families and friends. Adults build relationships with people who are important to children, and they support them to make the most of their time together. One parent described their child as 'happy and safe' at the home.

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

Children's safety and well-being are given high priority. Adults are attuned and responsive to the risks that are present for children individually and as a group.

Adults support children to understand the possible outcomes of their actions. As a result, incidents where children are at risk of harm are extremely rare.

Adults are well trained in the therapeutic model which is at the centre of the home's ethos. This relationship-based approach helps children to learn how to reflect on the challenges they experience and find ways of managing their emotions.

Consequences are not used. Instead, a restorative approach supports children to have a positive experience of learning how to make amends for their mistakes. There have been no incidents of physical restraint.

Adults have a keen awareness of the role of, and risks associated with, internet use and social media. They advise children about being safe online and know how to respond when concerns arise. Plans associated with the use of technology are regularly reviewed, with input from other professionals to ensure that they remain proportionate and suited to the needs of children.

Adults understand the importance of maintaining a balance between appropriate levels of oversight and allowing children the freedom to explore safely and responsibly. Children are given good opportunities to demonstrate that they are becoming increasingly safe.

Risks are well managed, and trust is integral to children's protection and sense of security. 'Keep safe' work is carefully planned and sensitively delivered by making it a part of regular conversations. It is individualised according to children's specific risks and vulnerabilities. Examples include understanding the impact of alcohol and substance misuse, body safety and privacy.

Adults are committed to creating and maintaining a relaxed atmosphere by actively encouraging children to live together harmoniously. Adults encourage children to spend time together but also recognise that children need opportunities to be on their own. Adults know the children extremely well. Therefore, when there is discord, they can proactively respond in a way which helps children to calm quickly.

Incidents of self-harm are infrequent and are responded to with care when they do occur. Adults are empathetic in their approach and offer effective emotional and practical support. Thorough 'Keeping Me Safe' plans provide reliable information for adults about understanding and responding to children's vulnerabilities and risks.

External professionals speak highly of the communication and joint working with the home. Incidents of concern are shared with relevant safeguarding agencies in a timely way. This ensures that plans to keep children safe can be agreed and implemented without delay.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been integral to the set-up and development of the home. He is a warm presence who exudes enthusiasm about the children's progress and devotion to their welfare. There is unanimously positive feedback from children,

adults and external professionals about their relationships with the registered manager and other leaders.

Leaders and managers recruit carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that they can maintain a culture of loving and nurturing care for children. The registered manager is committed to generating greater awareness of the benefits this approach has for children and is working to effect change in the wider social care network. One child has written a powerful testimonial about the care that they have received at this home and the organisation's other homes. They have described the positive impact of the sense of security they have as a direct result of experiencing a loving environment and supportive relationships.

Leaders and managers are receptive to feedback and find creative solutions that have a direct impact on children's care. In one example, the organisation has formalised the arrangements for support provided once children have moved out of the home. This ensures that there is ongoing help available from caregivers with whom children have built strong relationships.

Leaders and managers have created an inclusive culture which promotes equality and diversity. This enables children to explore their developing sense of identity and to feel comfortable about engaging in discussions with adults about subjects such as gender representation.

The registered manager proactively advocates for children to ensure that they are accessing the resources and support that they need. External professionals are kept informed about children's progress and experience. They receive weekly summaries that include photogs. External professionals speak highly of the child-focused nature of these summaries and of the overall approach to children's care.

Adults benefit from a range of supportive opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and consider how they impact on their practice. Group supervision and reflective diaries are used to help adults process their thoughts and feelings. This helps adults to remain emotionally attuned with themselves and with children. Individual supervision complements these practices and provides a space to discuss children's care and support needs, and development opportunities for adults. These sessions are frequent and responsive to adults' needs.

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: 2716876

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Child First Limited

Registered provider address: 62 The Street, Rustington, West Sussex BN16 3RN

Responsible individual: Michelle Wright

Registered manager: Matthew Langley

Inspector

Tash Williams, Social Care Inspector

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