

SC062079

Registered provider: The Children's Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service provides residential care for children who have an acquired brain injury, multiple disabilities and/or complex health needs. The service is registered as a children's home to accommodate up to 66 children across several separate houses. The types of residential care provided include long-stay care as well as short-break services. The home also provides rehabilitation services for children who have recently been diagnosed with an acquired brain injury.

As there are several residential homes that make up this service they are referred to as the children's homes in this report.

There is a non-maintained school on site, registered with the Department for Education (DfE), that some of the children attend. The home is also registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) because it provides nursing care.

The manager was registered by Ofsted on 1 May 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, Ofsted suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 August 2021

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: 21 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2020	Full	Outstanding
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
20/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Numerous examples of children's positive progress and experiences were noted during the inspection. The enthusiastic, compassionate multi-disciplinary staff have a thorough understanding of children's needs and take every opportunity to work together to meet these. Nevertheless, shortfalls were found in how managers monitor the quality of some aspects of the home's operation. These concerns have not had a significant impact on children's welfare.

Children's views inform their care and are used well to consider the operation of the home. Children regularly take part in staff interviews and help to develop their care plans. The staff carefully check how children with non-verbal communication can provide their views, and act on these. Leaders and managers consulted children about the organisation's statement of values which is now being amended to reflect child-friendly wording.

The staff consistently celebrate children's achievements, no matter how small, such as joining together as a child took his first steps after his injury. A child who was concerned about going out in public for the first time was assisted by the staff to have a great experience. This boosted his confidence and helped him to make a new friend. Staff are resourceful and work hard to help children progress.

Children's health needs are consistently met by a proactive and diverse team of medical and care staff. These staff work together well to identify and meet children's holistic needs. Opportunities to increase the staff team, to expand wider skills and knowledge, are identified and taken. For example, occupational therapists now regularly work with the staff within the children's homes. This change assists the care staff to further develop their skills to meet children's physical needs.

Children have fun at the homes. They take part in inclusive and stimulating group and individual activities. Children take part in art competitions and drumming sessions; they regularly do yoga and dancing sessions. The staff know what children like, such as which music they enjoy, which programmes they like to watch and books they like to read. Where children prefer a quieter environment, the staff arrange activities as one-to-one sessions or in smaller groups.

There is a wide array of effective support for parents. The staff skilfully work to support parents to be involved in their child's care if the child lives here. A parent spoke about their appreciation of the staff support provided while her child was rehabilitated.

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

The staff know the home's safeguarding procedures and report any concerns that they identify. They have good knowledge of safeguarding issues for children with a

disability. Some staffs' knowledge of more contextual issues, such as child sexual exploitation, was less secure. This has already been identified by leaders and managers who have commenced a training programme to improve this.

The staff know children's likely responses to difficult situations well and include these in detailed behaviour management plans. This assists the staff to know how to prevent a child from becoming more distressed and to stop difficult behaviour from escalating. Where staff are finding it difficult to support children with complex needs, managers review children's care.

Managers and staff act on safeguarding concerns appropriately. However, some records related to safeguarding incidents do not show that all the actions have taken place as required. This makes it difficult for senior leaders to confirm that all necessary actions have been carried out to safeguard children. During the inspection, leaders and managers put a comprehensive action plan in place to rectify this issue. A new recording system is also being developed to increase managers' ability to monitor and analyse children's safety and well-being.

The health and safety management team's professional, diligent actions, and effective monitoring systems, result in the home's large number of buildings and the estate being maintained to a high standard. As a result, children live in safe and well-maintained homes.

Staff across all areas of the homes' operation have embraced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stringent safety precautions have been consistently followed by all the organisation's medical, care and auxiliary staff. The organisation's response has resulted in minimal numbers of children testing positive for the virus and no child being seriously ill.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers know their service well. The children's homes are managed effectively. All the staff are proud to work for the organisation and celebrate the difference that they make for children. One member of staff said that they now receive better feedback from leaders and managers about their suggestions, including reasons why some ideas cannot be put into practice.

There is a strong learning and innovation culture within the organisation. The cross-disciplinary team use their knowledge and research of acquired brain injury effectively to assist the wider community to know more about this issue. For example, the staff are working with the DfE to develop information for teachers about the effects of acquired brain injury on children's learning and behaviour and the additional risks posed to children's safety and well-being.

Training plans are well organised and take account of children's and families' individual and group needs. There is a good level of flexibility to quickly adapt training plans where necessary and care is given to considering staff's skills when they move between the different homes on site.

Details of children's identities and histories can be found in their records, but not all staff know this information. Staff did not always know children's hometown or how a child's injury occurred. The staff are therefore not always able to take full account of all aspects of children's lives when caring for them.

Staff support is increasing to reflect the impact of working with children and their families as well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are more regular supervision meetings for staff to discuss safeguarding issues. With the easing of restrictions linked to COVID-19, senior managers can visit the homes more easily and talk with staff about issues they may have. Specific staff are being employed to consider and meet staff's needs. This is increasing the support for staff's emotional well-being.

At the previous inspection, a recommendation was made to ensure that good-quality supervision was consistently provided. This recommendation is not met. The quality of supervision remains variable and at times supervision is infrequent. A requirement has been raised to address this repeated shortfall. Nevertheless, the staff generally reported that they felt well-supported, especially by their direct line managers.

Some serious incidents have occurred, and appropriate action has been taken to safeguard children. However, Ofsted has not always been notified in line with regulatory requirements. This compromises the regulator's ability to oversee and monitor safeguarding practice within the homes.

Leaders and managers are aware that they have several staff vacancies, and they are actively recruiting to fill these positions. They look for resilience in applicants, which results in a low number of applicants being employed. However, this approach does help to retain staff.

Leaders, managers, and the staff build good relationships with other professionals to support children's voices in decisions made about their lives. One social worker said that the staff communicate well with him and support plans for children effectively, for example when a child is to move to live with their parents again.

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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p> <p>A notification made under this regulation—</p> <p>must include details of—</p> <p>the matter;</p> <p>the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and</p> <p>any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	<p>4 October 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p>	<p>4 October 2021</p>

<p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	
<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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	<p>4 October 2021</p>

What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all members of the senior leadership team know, understand and can apply regulations which relate to their leadership roles in the children’s home. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 52, paragraph 10.2)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have a good understanding of all aspects of a child’s history and how to take this into account when caring for children. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 14, paragraph 3.2)

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: SC062079

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The Children's Trust

Responsible individual: Jayne Cooper

Registered manager: Claire Shiels

Inspectors

Ruth Coler, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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