

SC064182

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to six children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that the home cares for children with autism and learning disabilities. The service provides one place for a short break and five long-term placements.

The home registered with Ofsted in 2005 and the manager registered with Ofsted in 2013.

There were five children living in the home at the time of this inspection and one child was accessing short-break care.

This inspection was conducted on site and involved meetings with children, staff and managers. Email and telephone contact took place with parents, family members and placing authority social workers.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

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: 9 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/10/2019	Full	Good
15/10/2018	Full	Good
08/05/2017	Full	Good
23/11/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality care in this home and make progress from their individual starting points. Care plans demonstrate that the manager and staff have a good understanding of children's needs and help them to achieve set targets. Some children are now able to manage their own self-care and cook food with support from staff. This helps children to learn and develop important life skills.

Children enjoy healthy lifestyles, and their health and well-being are prioritised. Staff offer a range of healthy meals and snacks. They also support children to exercise and be more active. This has helped children to reach a healthy weight and improve their overall health.

Staff support children and families to spend quality time together. One parent said: 'I never thought I would ever be able to do the things with my child that we can do now. We go out for dinner, trips to the zoo and he comes home every weekend. I did not think that was possible.' Families are also encouraged to spend time in the home. This helps children to feel settled and maintain important relationships.

Staff understand how children communicate their needs. Staff are creative and use a range of resources to ascertain children's wishes and feelings. Children are given choices and engage in activities for their monthly residents' meeting. Children get support to engage in their own care planning reviews and key-work sessions. The recording of this work is accessible for children and reflects their lived experiences. During this inspection, children reported that they like their home and think that it is good.

Children take part in a range of activities. Staff helped to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing activities in the home and local community. Additionally, children had set routines for home education when schools were closed.

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

Children living in the home have complex needs and require constant care and supervision. Consequently, there are no incidents of children going missing from the home and no concerns regarding exploitation. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and discuss their learning and understanding of safeguarding practice in their supervision sessions. This ensures that safeguarding practice is strong and remains a priority at the home.

Despite having a good safeguarding culture, not all staff are aware of whistle-blowing policies and procedures. This limits staff's understanding of how to respond to and raise a whistle-blowing concern.

Children have individual positive behaviour support plans and relaxation plans. Staff use de-escalation techniques to help children to manage their own behaviour. As a result, there is minimal use of restraint. If restraint is used, it is necessary and parents and social workers are informed. Children receive a debrief after restraint incidents using their own communication methods. This ensures that the impact of physical intervention is regularly reviewed and monitored.

Leaders and managers work closely with education providers to ensure that children have consistent routines and boundaries. This helps to improve children's behaviour and allows them to engage positively in education. As a result, children are able to make good progress in education. One child recently completed a course in life skills and obtained an entry level qualification in mathematics.

Safer recruitment practice ensures that staff are suitable to work with children. However, some staff files do not have clear recording of up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information. This shortfall potentially compromises children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leadership and management of the home are strong. The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. The registered manager is supported by two experienced team leaders and one experienced senior practitioner. The consistency of the management team provides stability for children and staff.

Leaders and managers have met all of the requirements raised at the last inspection. They work well with placing authorities to plan children's care and admission into the home. This helps children to have a positive experience and ensures that the home is the most suitable place for children to live.

Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. This provides ongoing oversight of practice and staff development. The registered manager keeps an up-to-date workforce development plan and has clear goals for the service.

Leaders and managers regularly monitor and review the quality of care provided to children. They listen to stakeholders and learn from feedback. This has seen an improvement in communication between staff, families and other professionals. As a result, children experience well-rounded care and support.

Staff are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the children in their care. Staff receive relevant training in important areas of practice, such as autism spectrum disorder awareness, dignity in care and positive behaviour support. This means that staff have the right skills to meet the children's needs.

At the request of parents, the home uses monitoring equipment in some children's bedrooms, to ensure their safety. However, leaders and managers do not have written consent from parents or placing authorities to do this. This means that there is a lack of clarity about the purpose of monitoring and when it should be used.

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 may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b))</p>	11 February 2022
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety.</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that recruitment records include up-to-date DBS information.</p>	18 February 2022

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are made familiar with the home’s internal whistle-blowing procedures during the induction process. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.9)

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: SC064182

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lodge Group Care UK Limited

Registered provider address: 87 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8JA

Responsible individual: John Timbs

Registered manager: Alina Opris

Inspector

Leanne Grant, Social Care Inspector

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