

1231404

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private home is registered to provide long-term care for up to four children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. In addition, the home may provide care for one child as part of a short-stay arrangement.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2019.

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 (SCIFF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCIFF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

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: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
08/11/2018	Full	Good
25/01/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children who live in this home have learning disabilities and/or complex health needs. They receive highly individualised care that is tailored to meet their needs. The support and care they receive from staff is leading to sustained and significant improvement to the lives of the children. One social worker said, 'I have been impressed with the care and love shown to [child's name] and how she has gained so much independence, confidence and self-esteem.'

Children live in a nurturing, family environment. The home is purpose built and is well equipped with specialist adaptations and resources to meet children's complex needs. Furthermore, staff have taken great care to ensure that children's bedrooms are personalised in line with their personal preferences and interests.

Staff are creative and playful in their approaches with children. They initiate interesting and fun activities that engage and stimulate children. For example, on one occasion staff decorated the sensory room as a jungle and used smells, sounds and sensory toys to create an opportunity for imaginative play.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities both at the home and in the community. For example, children enjoy activities such as messy play, cooking and swimming. Staff are ensuring that children's disabilities are not a barrier to children leading a full and interesting life.

Staff are ambitious for children and are supporting them to learn new skills and realise their full potential. As a result, some children are becoming increasingly independent. For example, one child is now almost fully independent with undertaking his personal care tasks and getting ready for school. This is equipping him with the skills to live more independently when he reaches adulthood. Another child has started to hold a spoon for the first time and helps to feed herself.

Staff are skilled at communicating with children with complex needs. They understand the methods children use to communicate their needs and can interpret subtle cues and changes in children's body language. Staff are extremely responsive to children and maximise opportunities to facilitate their communication. However, the information on children's individual communication methods is not documented in enough detail in children's care plans. A recommendation has been made to improve this.

Children are listened to and their wishes and feelings acted on. Staff encourage and support children to express their wishes and make choices in a meaningful way. As a result, children are making excellent progress with their communication. For example, one child has started to use a consistent sign to indicate when he wants

more food. This means that children are empowered to make choices and have self-determination.

Staff work hard to ensure that children's education is not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational attendance is high; however, when children are not able to attend school, staff ensure that they participate daily in educational activities that engage and stimulate them. Staff have researched appropriate activities and adapted them to match each child's developmental level.

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

Children benefit from a high level of supervision and support that is in line with their assessed needs. This ensures that children's complex health needs are safely met and that they are protected from harm. In addition, families expressed a high level of confidence in the staff team's ability to care for their child. One parent said, 'I am very happy with the care my daughter receives. Staff know her well and I know she is safe there.'

Staff receive a comprehensive induction and training programme. This equips them with the specialist skills to safely manage children's complex health needs. This training is provided by a nurse employed by the organisation. During each stage of the training, staff are tested on their knowledge and skills to ensure they are competent to meet the complex health needs of children safely. Staff do not undertake certain tasks, such as medicine administration, until they have demonstrated their competency.

Children are supported by staff who know and understand them well. Staff work hard to attempt to interpret and understand what children are trying to communicate through their behaviours. As a result, staff can anticipate potential triggers and de-escalate situations effectively. For some children, there has been a significant reduction in behaviours that are challenging and/or self-injurious. Following all incidents, staff spend time with children to reflect on the incident and their behaviours. This helps children to understand their responses and regulate their emotions. Physical interventions are rarely used and only as a last resort to keep children safe.

Highly effective and careful planning manages and minimises risks to children both inside and outside the home. In addition, staff carefully balance risk with the need for children to experience new activities and to become more independent. For example, following careful planning, one child is now able to go to the local shop independent of staff support. The child is proud of this achievement and, as a result, he is striving to achieve further independence.

Where restrictions on children's liberty exist, the registered manager ensures that the correct legal authority has been sought to sanction this. Restrictions are kept under review to ensure they remain proportionate, legal and the least restrictive arrangement possible.

Children benefit from well-planned care from a skilled and knowledgeable staff team. Staff are attuned to children's physical presentation and are quick to notice subtle changes in children's body language and vocalisations. This helps staff to intervene quickly to divert, distract or soothe children.

Care planning documents clearly describe children's multiple complex needs and how staff should support them. This promotes consistently safe practice. These documents are updated to reflect children's changing needs.

Staff work closely with healthcare professionals to support improvements in children's health and well-being. For example, one child was unable to take his food orally when he first came to live at the home. He is now taking all his meals orally and this has opened new opportunities for him to try new tastes and foods on a daily basis. This has resulted in a healthy weight gain and increased his quality of life.

The manager ensures that stringent safety measures are adopted in the home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is supporting children to stay healthy and well. In addition, staff have worked creatively to help children to understand information about the COVID-19 virus and alleviate any anxieties they may feel. For example, staff organised a facemask decorating activity to support children to overcome their fears about facemasks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This home benefits from excellent leadership. The registered manager is an inspirational leader. She is a visible presence in the home and is accessible to both children and staff.

The manager is ambitious for children and she is committed to ensuring that children receive high-quality care that supports them to fulfil their potential. She has successfully embedded a child-centred culture in the home.

The manager is a strong advocate for children. She is proactive in ensuring children have access to the support and specialist resources that they require.

The manager uses research to inform and shape practice in the home. She generates creative ways to support children to achieve the best outcomes. For example, she has introduced bespoke communication and sensory programmes for staff to follow when working with individual children. As a result, children are making significant and sustained progress.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive induction and training programme. This equips them with the specialist knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their roles effectively and safely. Staff value this training and told the inspector that it enhances the quality of their practice and supports their continuous development. One member of

staff said, 'The training is extensive and the support given to staff is of a high level. It shapes you into a strong member of a unique team.'

The manager is committed to employing and retaining a highly trained workforce. She is making changes to the home's staffing structure, which will support staff retention. When staff leave, the manager and the staff team work hard to provide children with continuity of care and to minimise any impact on children.

The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the rights of children who require constant supervision, but who do not have the mental capacity to consent to this. She has worked closely with external professionals to ensure that the rights of children are safeguarded.

Staff feel supported by their managers and the wider staff team. The manager is receptive to new ideas and encourages creativity in the staff team. As a result, staff feel valued. One member of staff said, 'Staff have full input and can share ideas on how to further improve everything at [name of children's home].'

Staff benefit from regular supervision which helps them to reflect on their practice. In addition, managers use supervision as a learning opportunity to enhance and inform staff practice. For example, staff are given safeguarding scenarios to discuss in supervision. This affords managers the opportunity to routinely test staff confidence and competency in safeguarding children.

Family members and external professionals speak highly of the manager and express confidence in the staff team's ability to meet children's complex needs. Furthermore, they value the high level of communication they have with the staff at the home. Families told the inspector that the regular updates they receive give them great reassurance about their child's health and well-being.

Staff morale is high. Staff speak positively about their roles and demonstrate a warm and nurturing approach towards the children. One member of staff said, 'I skip into work, and look forward to coming in every day. This is because [name of children's home] does not feel like a "children's home". It just feels like "home" with children living there, in a nurturing, warm, family environment.'

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

- The registered person should ensure that each child's care plan contains a detailed description of the child's individual method of communication. ('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: 1231404

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Registered provider address: Siskin Drive, Middlemarch Business Park, Coventry
CV3 4FJ

Responsible individual: Gary Thompson

Registered manager: Sarah Lonergan

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

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