

SC069178

Registered provider: Inroads Essex Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to nine children. The home cares for children aged eight to 18 with a range of intellectual and developmental disabilities, additional needs and social and emotional difficulties. The home consists of two individual houses on one site.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2012.

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: 12 and 13 January 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: 24 April 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2019	Full	Good
16/01/2019	Full	Good
07/11/2017	Full	Good
27/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, seven children were living at the home. Five children have lived at the home for a long time. One child has moved into the home in the past six months.

The staff know the children well and enjoy spending time with them. Staff understand the children's strengths and vulnerabilities and how to help them. The staff work closely with parents and communicate well with them. A variety of methods are used to share information. Parents enjoy receiving photographs and videos of their child. A social worker said that the staff really care about the children. A parent said that the staff are like extended family members.

Staff celebrate children's achievements. They use individualised targets to help children progress. One child has learned to recognise their emotions and talk to staff about their feelings. Another child is learning to manage their own money. Children develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Staff help children attend school or engage with tutors at the home. Children have access to books and resources. One child has been taught to choose different colours. Another child is now confident to organise a bus trip into the local town. A parent said that during the COVID-19 pandemic his child continued to be educated by staff. The parent noticed significant progress in the child's concentration levels because of this. The staff have established good communication with local schools and tutors, which helps children to progress and achieve in education.

Staff help children to maintain healthy lifestyles. They organise medical appointments and ensure that children attend. Medication is managed safely. Staff are proactive in sourcing external advice to support children's emotional needs effectively. Staff have suitable training to enable them to meet the children's health needs.

Staff provide a range of meaningful activities for children. Children have been taken on holiday, to theme parks and trips to the local town. The staff help children to enjoy activities with their families. Children are encouraged to have their own interests and hobbies. One child attends the local library with staff so she can choose her own books to read. Another child likes to have her nails painted and staff organise for this to be done professionally. Photos of children's activities are displayed in the home and saved in memory books. This helps children to gain a sense of identity and belonging.

The manager has approached advocacy services to request advocates for the children. However, this has been unsuccessful. Therefore, children do not have

opportunities to speak with an independent advocate to discuss their views and feelings.

One of the two homes is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The other home does not provide the same quality of accommodation. The flooring in bathrooms is stained and wooden skirting boards and handrails on the stairs are damaged. Staff have painted artwork in children's bedrooms, which personalises them. However, the plaster is uneven and crumbling. This does not help children to feel a sense of pride in their home.

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

Children have good relationships with the staff, who they trust. Staff know the children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Plans are followed and adapted to keep children safe.

On one occasion, a child has gone missing from the home. The child received cohesive support from staff and police promptly. A return home interview provided the child with the opportunity to talk about their feelings. Children at risk of exploitation are provided with guidance from trained staff. The staff work closely with local professionals to identify areas of risk in the community.

Staff implement and review risk assessments, which guide children on how to keep children safe. Strategies are identified to manage risks. Staff demonstrate good understanding of risks and how to manage them. One child is involved in menu planning, which has helped her to have healthier eating patterns.

Staff help children to develop and maintain relationships with their friends and family. Families are invited to the home for special events. One parent said that they are always invited to celebrate their child's birthday. Children who live together are encouraged to eat meals in the dining room and go on shared activities. This provides opportunities for children to socialise.

Staff implement a positive behaviour support approach with children. Praise and encouragement are used to reinforce wanted behaviours. One child in particular is restrained to keep him safe. However, staff make all attempts to use restraint as a last resort. When restraint is used, children and staff are debriefed by the manager. Social workers and families are informed when incidents have occurred.

Staff help children to create their own contracts in which they agree how they will use the internet and mobile devices safely. Staff work with children to help them understand the risks that others pose to them online. Staff identified that one child was at risk of online grooming. They worked with the child to understand the dangers. The child is now able to keep themselves safe when using social media.

The manager follows safer recruitment processes. New staff have opportunities to shadow more experienced members of staff. This helps children to build relationships with newer members of the team.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. Senior managers are involved in the day-to-day management of the home. Staff feel supported.

The manager has effective monitoring systems, which she uses to review the service. She works in partnership with children and families to make improvements.

The manager has knowledge of the home's strengths and the areas for improvement, which she uses to review the quality of care. The manager works with staff to make positive changes and she addresses any practice issues. Children receive high standards of care from staff who are well supported.

The staff team is well established. Staff receive formal and informal supervisions. New staff receive a thorough induction before working with children. Team meetings are planned regularly and well attended by staff. The manager provides staff with important updates and the welfare of children is discussed as a priority.

The manager provides regular professional development opportunities for staff. All staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to raise concerns. The staff are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the children living at the home. Staff are qualified to, or are working towards, a suitable level 3 diploma.

The manager has good relationships with other professionals. When she has concerns about the well-being of children, she challenges appropriately. The manager is focused on children receiving suitable care which keeps them safe. One child requires specialist behaviour support. The manager has worked proactively with other professionals to identify an appropriate provision.

The staff continued to provide good care, support and routines for children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The manager has provided staff and children with regular lateral flow tests and personal protective equipment. Staff have shown commitment to the children so that they benefited from being cared for by adults who know them well. Most parents reported good communication during the pandemic. The manager works weekends to show the staff she supports them.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i))</p> <p>In particular, repair and update plaster work, woodwork and flooring.</p>	<p>31 March 2022</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children can access, if they wish, an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 23, paragraph 4.16)

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: SC069178

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Inroads Essex Limited

Registered provider address: Suffolk House 7 Hydra, Orian Court Addison Way,
Great Blakenham, Suffolk IP6 0LW

Responsible individual: Vivienne Norton

Registered manager: Katarzyna Kuchno

Inspector

Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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