

SC020193

Registered provider: The SENAD Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for up to 25 children with severe learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder and who display associated challenging behaviour.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably experienced and qualified.

Inspection dates: 20 and 22 June 2023

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | good |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 16/08/2022 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 23/05/2022 | Full | Inadequate |
| 24/08/2021 | Full | Good |
| 21/01/2020 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in all areas of their lives. This is made possible with the support of staff. Children and staff have positive relationships, and staff ensure that children benefit from personalised care that is attuned to their complex needs and individual communication styles. Children grow in self-confidence and self-esteem because of the consistent care and support of staff.

Staff want the best for children. They have persevered through some challenging times. Staff are passionate and motivated. They always recognise the good progress that children make, no matter how small this might be. For example, one child is now able to safely remove themselves from the area when it becomes too noisy for them. Another child is spending more time with peers and staff. However, there is currently no rewards system in place to document children's achievements.

Education is inclusive and diverse, meeting each child's bespoke needs. Some children are not able to manage the busy environment of school and are therefore taught in 'small garden' classrooms. Sensitive steps are taken to encourage and promote their attendance, and education is brought to the home in the form of homework or specific pieces of learning. As a result, all children are helped to learn and benefit from a culture that promotes learning in many forms.

Staff understand the need for children to spend time with their families and people who are important to them. Staff ensure arrangements are in place to promote and support children to have time with their families and attend family celebrations. This means that children maintain a sense of identity and connection with their families.

Children have the chance to embrace new experiences. Staff make sure that children's complex needs do not stop them from accessing activities or the facilities they enjoy. The range of activities provided means that children develop social skills and achieve positive outcomes. This also develops confidence and self-esteem.

Staff promote children to enjoy healthy activities. Children are registered with all health professionals, and their medical needs are met. However, children do not consistently enjoy healthy and well-balanced meals, and processed food is frequently provided. This obscures children's understanding of the impact that an unhealthy diet can have on their health and well-being.

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

The children's individual risk assessments are of good quality. They demonstrate that staff know the children well and identify potential risks, triggers and the vulnerability of the children. Plans to reduce risks are detailed and effective, providing staff with guidance on how to keep children safe.

When there are safeguarding concerns, there is a swift and effective response from managers and staff. Staff at all levels take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously, working together to ensure that safeguarding responses are thorough. This creates a culture where safeguarding children is central to staff care practice.

Staff are familiar with and confident in the use of safeguarding processes should they witness poor practice from other staff. All allegations have been reported to managers and thoroughly investigated. Managers liaise appropriately with the local authority designated officer and professionals to ensure children are effectively safeguarded.

Medication systems and processes are managed safely. Staff receive the necessary training and assessments to ensure they are confident and competent in this area. The administration of medication is sensitive to children's individual needs. When errors or near-misses do occur, managers ensure lessons are learned to improve practice.

The use of physical restraint has been reduced. Leaders and managers have taken steps to reduce the use of floor holds. A new practice has been introduced to support children who would previously require these holds. However, staff debriefs do not include reflective practice. This is a missed opportunity to ensure lessons are learned.

The manager places the safety and welfare of children first and recruits new staff in accordance with safer recruitment protocols. New staff undergo a range of checks that are designed to minimise the likelihood of children being harmed by those caring for them.

Systems are in place to ensure maintenance issues are quickly responded to. Managers have shown effective prioritisation of tasks, ensuring children are not impacted because of the work required on the building. Overall, the home feels warm and inviting. This is managed well alongside the complex needs of the children and their safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is inspirational, knowledgeable and focused on providing children with exceptional care. She is passionate about leading and managing a home where child-focused practice is at the centre of everything they do. The manager is well supported by capable assistant managers and experienced senior leaders. The manager has good oversight of the home, its strengths and areas for development. There are clear plans for continuing to improve the home, and there is an aspiration to provide outstanding care and support for children.

There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. However, the manager has been thorough in ensuring children's staffing ratios are maintained at the required levels. Managers and staff have worked additional hours to ensure the quality of care has not been affected while vacancies are filled.

The manager has implemented a range of systems to ensure that she has improved oversight of the quality of care provided. Assistant managers are now based in each of the homes, providing further guidance to staff. Checklists are used to ensure that daily tasks are completed, and various audits take place monthly. These changes have been embedded since the last inspection and have resulted in improved practice.

All staff have completed mandatory training in key areas, such as safeguarding and how to keep the home safe and free from hazards. The staff training programme, particularly in relation to meeting children's complex needs, is extensive. This increases staff knowledge and awareness of the issues relevant to the children.

Moves to and from the home are managed well. Managers act in the best interest of the child. For example, the dedicated staff team provided nurturing and safe care for an additional year while advocating for an appropriate placement to be identified for one child. As a result, children feel supported when arriving and leaving this home.

Partnership working is a strength of the managers and staff. The manager works effectively with partner agencies, including the placing local authorities, health professionals, the school and families. This ensures that everyone involved with the child works closely together.

Staff describe the manager as very supportive and say they enjoy coming to work. Staff are now receiving regular supervision, and managers provide them with the oversight and direction they need to develop within their role.

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, The 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 health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals.</p> | 24 July 2023 |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.39)
- The registered person should ensure that the review of restraint records provides the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: SC020193

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The SENAD Group Limited

Registered provider address: 1 St. Georges House, Vernon Gate, Derby DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual: Mark Ryder

Registered manager: Sarah Callanan

Inspectors

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector
Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector
Ellen Monk, Social Care Inspector

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