

SC035625

Registered provider: Rowden House School Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a residential special school. It can care for up to 30 children with learning disabilities across eight houses in the grounds of the school. At the time of this inspection, 18 children were living at the children's home.

The home has a school on the same site, which is open to children living at the home and day students. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on this site.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2020 and holds the appropriate qualifications.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 September 2023

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: 28 June 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
28/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
01/10/2019	Full	Good
05/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff support children to make progress in all areas of their lives. The positive working relationships with care staff and education staff, and the multi-disciplinary teamwork, ensure that children experience consistent, targeted support.

Staff support children to develop their communication skills and to work towards independence. Children are now able to make drinks, prepare meals and make choices about what they want to do or eat.

All staff understand the importance of, and are skilled at developing, the children's ability to communicate their needs effectively. They work in partnership to identify the children's needs and gradually introduce systems that eventually have an impact on all areas of the children's lives. For example, through one child's personal education plan, a speech and language therapist identified a communication need. The child has the opportunity to trial an eye gazer, which was successful. Due to cost, the managers and staff worked together with the local authority to pool resources and purchased some eye-gaze equipment. As a result, children are helped to develop their skills to make choices and express their views.

Staff promote the children's rights to make choices, participate and engage. The children are at ease and enjoy spending time with the staff, who understand them well. Staff consult with the children using a range of tools and partnership agencies. For example, all children have access to advocates. The organisation also employs an advocate who visits on a regular basis, feeds observations back to the management team and represents children as required. Consequently, someone independent is proactively involved in decision-making processes for individual children.

Most of the children attend the on-site school. There is good joint working with daily handovers and sharing of information. Staff from the home provide support in school, and school staff provide support at the home as needed. This provides consistency for children from those who know them well. Consequently, children who were reluctant attenders in previous education placements are now enjoying going to school and have improved attendance.

Staff help the children to enjoy a wide range of activities. For example, children enjoy walks in the grounds, riding trikes, playing on the play equipment or going to the leisure barn, where there is water play and a variety of activities. Staff also take the children out into the community. They visit parks, trampoline parks and the beach. They go swimming and on holidays, shopping trips and out for meals. Some children are members of a local football team. As an extra treat, the ice-cream van visits every week.

Staff promote children's culture and identity. They make sure the environment reflects, where possible, children's likes and culture. Specific foods and music are available, and, when children want to, they are helped to attend church. Each house has themed weeks, for example friendship week, ice-cream week, Halloween, Easter and learning about other countries. The houses also come together to share in whole-site activities, such as the end of year prom, the graduation party, discos, summer and Christmas fairs, and the Rowden in Bloom festival.

Children's moves to and from the home and between the houses on site are well planned. There is clear consultation with children and partner agencies. As a result, children settle quickly into their new home.

Staff encourage the children's families to visit, and they provide accommodation for those who want it when they visit. Children are supported to visit their families and keep in touch through technology. Staff support days out with families so that children can enjoy extended times with them. As a result, children are helped to be part of their family even when they live some distance from home.

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

Careful assessment and planning mean that staff understand the children's risks and work to reduce them. Children have high staffing ratios, and no child goes out alone. All the children benefit from an approach to risk management that enhances their independence according to their ability and understanding.

Due to the children's complex needs, they can at times display extremely difficult and challenging behaviour. There are clear behaviour management strategies in place to help the children to de-escalate their behaviours and learn skills to self-regulate. Staff receive a range of appropriate training. This ensures they have a good understanding of these behaviours and know what actions to take to reassure and sensitively support the children. Managers carefully analyse all incidents to ensure good practice, review that strategies are working and ensure multi-agency support where a child is struggling. As a result, incidents of staff needing to use physical intervention continue to reduce.

Staff praise and celebrate children's positive behaviours and successes. They also provide sensitive reassurance when a child is upset. They focus well on supporting the children to learn to express their feelings and emotions. They also promote independence and the child's voice by encouraging the children to make choices. These new skills enable the children to communicate their needs and influence their lives more effectively.

The home is on a large site with numerous buildings and extensive grounds. There are regular checks of the environment from the in-house staff as well as from external professionals. The manager has assessed the risks to ensure the site is safe for children.

Managers follow safeguarding procedures effectively. Incidents of concern are recorded clearly, and managers take prompt action. They have high expectations of staff conduct and, where necessary, implement staff disciplinary processes. Expectations are reinforced in team meetings, training and supervision.

The manager has reviewed her monitoring of recruitment checks. Her robust monitoring ensure all safer recruitment checks are completed before staff come to work at the home. This means that the children benefit from having staff working with them who have been safely vetted.

There have been several medication errors. Managers have acted following errors, looked at reasons, made sure training is suitable and reviewed administration systems. However, errors have been made, and a good practice recommendation has been made to reflect this.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a passionate and committed practitioner who has reflected on previous inspections. She has made changes to drive improvements, which have resulted in improved care for the children.

The manager's monitoring systems have been used effectively. The manager has systems that monitor and track children's progress and behaviour. When children are in crisis, this is identified early and shared with other professionals. As a result, children receive prompt support to help them through any crisis period.

After a review of the staff induction process, the manager identified that on occasions some information was left to interpretation. This could mean staff were not clear about certain aspects of their role. As a result, the induction process has been improved so that there are specific examples. This has helped to reduce any misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Staff are complimentary about the manager and the organisation. They feel well supported and say that managers at all levels are visible and approachable. Staff say that they can raise concerns, knowing that managers will take action.

Staff benefit from regular supervision. There are practical aspects of supervision where staff are tested on their knowledge. Managers also use resources such as television documentaries to facilitate discussions with staff. They discuss how they would deal with things if they saw practice that gave them cause for concern. This enables staff to understand how poor practice can develop and their responsibility to report it.

Staff understand the importance of their own learning and development. Managers have put in place clear plans as to the expectations. There is a variety of online and face-to-face training. In addition, there is learning in team meetings and discussions with other professionals. Staff who are not yet qualified are enrolled to undertake the relevant qualification and supported through the process.

Parents and social workers were positive about the care, support and progress of the children.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Specifically, the registered person should further review current systems and staff training to eliminate medication errors as far as possible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: SC035625

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Rowden House School Limited

Registered provider address: 1 St George's, Vernon Gate, Derby, Derbyshire DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual: Mark Ryder

Registered manager: Iwona Makal

Inspectors

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

Dawn Bennett, Social Care Inspector

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