

# 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 and offers care for up to 30 children with learning disabilities. Care is provided across eight houses in the grounds of the school. At the time of this inspection, 18 children were living at the home.

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

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

### Inspection dates: 10 and 12 June 2024

**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:** 11 September 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2023	Full	Good
28/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
01/10/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children make good progress. There is good partnership working between the on-site school, parents, staff and children. Children's targets are shared, agreed and monitored. Progress has included improvements in school attendance, health and independence as well as a reduction in incidents.

Children's progress is recorded and captured in written and photographic form, which provides memories for children and their families. Children enjoy various experiences, such as taking part in music sessions, cooking and Ramadan.

Staff make sure that children's achievements, no matter how small, are celebrated. Each child has a praise book which staff use with children to record and show how well they are doing.

When children find it difficult to attend education, care and teaching staff are creative in helping them, devising bespoke learning packages. As a result, one child is now more accepting of learning opportunities.

Advocacy is a positive feature of the home. Once a month, the advocate visits the children and reflects with staff on the progress children are making. The advocate also attends meetings and will support children with any worries they may have. The manager sees this as an important part of their oversight, which enhances monitoring of children's progress.

Many children struggle to access health services, such as dental appointments, vaccinations and blood tests. As a result, the home has created a desensitisation room. This room replicates visiting the dentist or doctor and is a great help for children in increasing their familiarity and reducing anxieties. It also plays an important role for staff in helping them to prepare and plan for how to support children during medical appointments. As a result, children are attending appointments and receiving treatment where previously they would have refused.

Children take part in a good range of activities on and off site. These include attending the local scarecrow festival, going on holiday, and attending fun days taking place at the school, where children, staff and their families all come together to enjoy games, ice cream and a bouncy castle.

Staff help children to stay in touch with those who are important to them. They help children with telephone and video calls and support visits from families and to family homes. In addition, staff have supported children to go on holiday with their families. This level of commitment by staff means that children feel part of their families despite living away from home.

Overall, the home provides a welcoming environment for children. Bedrooms are personalised and reflect who the child is and their interests. However, there are boxes labelled 'ligature' and bins labelled 'clinical' outside children's bedrooms. This detracts from the homeliness of the environment.

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

There are mutually strong relationships between staff and children. Staff have an excellent understanding of children, their needs and behaviours. In one example, staff were able to demonstrate this knowledge by pre-empting a child's behaviour and sensitively supporting them, which eliminated the child's distress and upset.

Complaints are responded to promptly. There is good multi-agency working and learning outcomes are identified for staff and managers.

Allegations are responded to effectively. There is clear evidence of multi-agency working with the local authority designated officer (LADO), social workers and advocates. When staff are subject to allegations, measures are put in place to respond and to safeguard children and staff. When learning has been identified, this has been shared with the whole team.

There are systems in place for managers to monitor children's medication, which allows for swift identification of errors. When errors occur, the staff are reflective in discussions, and managers seek to understand the reason for the error and if any changes are required. When needed, additional professional support is sought. Errors are not frequent, and managers and staff aim to learn from these to prevent further occurrences.

Children use technology such as mobile phones and tablet computers. Online safety systems are in place and the Wi-Fi is monitored. The manager receives alerts if anyone in the home is trying to access sites they should not. In addition, staff supervise, check children's devices and work with children to help them understand online risks.

Children have not gone missing from this home. Children's plans outline what action staff should take if this was to happen. However, they do not provide sufficient information for staff to understand how to respond if a child was to go missing when out in the community or when to contact the police. This could result in a delay in getting help in finding the child promptly.

On occasions, staff need to use physical intervention techniques to keep children safe. Staff complete the necessary records, and there is management oversight of these incidents. However, some records do not clearly show all the details needed. This limits the opportunity to fully evaluate the need for the intervention or consider learning from it.

New children moving to the home are assessed for suitability for the school and the residential provision. However, records do not show how matching and suitability have been assessed for an individual house.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager is reflective about the journey of the service. She speaks fondly about the children and is knowledgeable about them. The manager talks with ease about the progress of children and staff.

The manager has developed monitoring systems which have improved the quality of care. She is fully aware of what is happening in the home and is visible and accessible to children and staff. She has a good understanding of children's progress along with areas of development.

A strength of the home is that it has a stable and consistent staff team. The team of staff are diverse in terms of their age, experience, gender and culture. This diversity brings many opportunities to the home, such as knowledge of children's cultures and how to meet their individual needs.

When children become increasingly unsettled, managers work with multi-agency staff to try and resolve this. The manager has only served notice to a placing authority after all else has failed. Despite one child's placing authority having notice served, staff ensured that the child moved on in a positive manner. The child was engaged in the move and happy with the plan.

Staff are positive about the management of the home. They speak of a positive culture of support and learning and of feeling inspired by working at the home.

Staff receive an excellent variety of training. This is clearly monitored and tracked by the manager. Training is delivered online, face to face and through practical learning. Face-to-face training is delivered by a range of professionals, including education staff, the LADO and social workers. There is reflection after training takes place. Where needed, the manager will review the home's policies. Staff are qualified or working within timescales to attain the relevant childcare qualification.

Staff receive supervision from managers. However, not all sessions are carried out in line with the home's workforce development plan. For some staff, quizzes are used instead of reflective discussions. This can limit understanding of staff's learning, development and skills.

Staff complete an induction and probation period to assess their suitability for the role. Occasionally, staff are put on performance plans to improve their practice. However, induction and performance plan records are brief. They do not clearly show action taken, learning or review. This could mean that staff are not clear about expectations.

Since the last inspection, the home's workforce development plan has been updated. However, it does not provide all information as per the guidance. For example, it does not include details of who is providing the health and education services in the home.

Parents and professionals are very complimentary about the home. They talk about the good communication and how well the home and school staff work together. One parent described staff as 'golden' and said that she appreciates her daily photos and the support staff give her and her child. Professionals said that they wish more services were like this and commented on how staff and managers know the children well.

## 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that missing-from-care plans for children contain all the necessary information, such as the action staff should take if children go missing in the community and when to call the police.</p>	<p>26 July 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>staff receive supervision in line with the organisation’s policy and that records are comprehensive;</p> <p>induction plans are fully completed;</p>	<p>26 July 2024</p>

any performance plans for staff detail the concerns and actions to be taken and are reviewed.	
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## Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. Specifically, assessments should include details of how the registered person has assessed the suitability of placing a child in a specific house. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). Specifically, the plan should include information about persons providing the health and education services in the home and detail the experience of the team and training required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. In most cases, children's homes should be homely, domestic environments. The home must comply with relevant health and safety legislations, such as alarms and food hygiene. However, in doing so, the home should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept and contain all the information needed to enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. Specifically, ensure that the time is recorded for each use of physical intervention and greater detail on de-escalation methods used by staff. ('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:** 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  
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