

SC025700

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable organisation. The home specialises in the treatment of children who present with severe emotional and behavioural problems as a result of attachment difficulties that are usually rooted in early-life trauma.

The registered manager has been in post since 10 April 2007.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 November 2019

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: 10 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
17/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
09/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/09/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional and remarkable progress in this nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are trained in, and supported to implement, an innovative model of care that is embedded in practice. They assess and monitor the children's development at regular intervals. There is a strong team-around-the-child approach. The whole staff team is involved in the initial and ongoing assessments and plans for children. Children can 'just be children' at this home, and they learn that their views matter and can influence their world.

The staff build strong relationships with the children and care passionately about them. As a result, the children trust the staff and respond extremely well to their efforts to meet their needs and keep them safe.

All the children's attendance at their education provisions has improved significantly. Records of the last academic year evidence that attendance levels exceeded 90%, with the spring term 2019 at 99%. A social worker spoke of a child who now attends school full-time, which was not felt previously possible. This child is now able to work independently with staff support. During the inspection, a child very excitedly and proudly spoke about how he has secured a place at a mainstream school and cannot wait to start. This achievement will have a significant impact on his long-term development.

The regular community meetings are excellent examples of how children are helped to engage positively with each other and staff. During these meetings, the children discuss their feelings, show kindness to others and express their excitement about recent trips, birthdays and anniversaries. All the children engage in these regular meetings, which build their confidence.

The staff enable the children to engage in activities both at and outside the home. The children enjoyed their annual summer camping trip, and were surprised with a weekend break to Butlins. The home holds an annual summer fete where the children help with the stalls and games, and decide which charities the funds raised will be donated to. Children develop their own hobbies and interests through their involvement with local football teams, breakdancing clubs and scouts, and in swimming lessons. The children have positive experiences and a sense of achievement, which develop and boost their self-esteem.

The home helps the children to spend time with their families when it is safe to do so. The staff work with family members to help them to meet the needs of their children. One child, with support from staff, has constructed a list of questions that they wish to ask their mum about their childhood and why they came into care. As a result of the staff's efforts, the children benefit from improved family relationships.

This therapeutic home is welcoming and warm. The decoration and furnishings are of a very high bespoke standard, with added touches from the children who live there. Pictures of memorable events adorn the walls to remind the children of happy occasions spent together.

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

Staff work tirelessly to ensure that the children are safe. The implementation of highly effective planning and risk assessments contributes to the reduction in risky behaviours.

Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for children. They use their positive relationships to explain what is expected. As a result, the behaviour of children in the home is generally good. Children are encouraged to talk about their emotions with the staff and external professionals. Because of this support, the children find safe ways to manage their feelings.

There has only been one incident of a child going missing, which was for a short period of time. Sanctions have only been used twice since the last inspection, and on both occasions were proportionate and fair. This progress is fed back to other agencies through informative reports and is presented verbally during children looked after reviews.

The team leader spoke passionately about using a research-based project into the preferred restraint method used at the home. She met directly with the author of the research to challenge and reduce restraints. The team leader said, 'It changed my life. It was inspirational and resulted in a decrease in the number of restraints used at the home.' Records reflect a huge decrease in the number of restraints used due to this innovative piece of work. A social worker said about their child, 'He now has the ability to listen and rationalise, and his safe holds have reduced drastically.'

Managers deal robustly with any incidents in which the staff's behaviour does not meet the expected standards. Such a response gives children a powerful message that their well-being is the priority of the home.

Feedback from other agencies is exceptionally good. All the external professionals consulted with commented on what excellent work the home has achieved with the children, and how their safeguarding concerns are alleviated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by a strong, experienced manager. He leads a positive staff team to deliver care that is grounded in one shared ethos. The manager, deputies and team leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious for the children in their care.

The leadership team tracks the work of the staff team and the progress of the children. The registered manager has an excellent understanding of what works well and where further development is needed. Because of this approach, the staff team has become more skilled and children have made exceptional progress.

Staff work very well together. They spoke very highly of peer support. Leaders use team-development strategies to improve team cohesion. These strategies are extremely useful. The staff are consistent in the care that they provide for the children. As a result, children have confidence in their carers, and feel safe.

Staff supervision and team meetings are structured, take place regularly and are well recorded. Staff feel able to share their experiences. They respect their peers and the senior management. The manager excels in developing staff. Care that is based on an integrated systemic model helps to stabilise children who have suffered early-life trauma and supports their transitions in every possible aspect of their care.

Training in practice-related subjects is extensive. The manager recognises that the training required by staff can change, and he sources training that matches those requirements. A consultant nutritionist came to the home during the inspection to provide guidance for the staff and the children on healthy eating. At the end of a very full afternoon of discussion, a pre-planned nutritious meal was cooked for all to share. This creative approach results in remarkable improvements in the children's health and well-being.

The manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and acts quickly to address any shortfalls or areas for development. The monitoring and review of plans are exceptional, and the home is able to evidence positive change in children's outcomes.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC025700

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Registered provider address: 210 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX

Responsible individual: Stephen Blunden

Registered manager: Charles Lamb

Inspector

Cathy Russell: social care inspector

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