

# SC025700

Registered provider:

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 caring for children with severe social and emotional difficulties that are usually rooted in early life trauma.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2008.

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: 16 and 17 November 2021

**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:** 21 November 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
21/11/2019	Full	Outstanding
10/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
17/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
09/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

At the time of this inspection, 10 children were living at the home. Children are provided with outstanding care by staff who have an in-depth understanding of their needs and the trauma that they have experienced. This results in children making significant progress in different areas of their lives.

All children have achieved 100% school attendance during this academic year. This is despite some children having a history of negative education experiences and poor attendance. Some children have moved from attending the on-site school to external provision. Staff have worked closely with children's social workers and new schools to ensure that transitions are successful. One child, who recently moved to a mainstream school, did not initially feel comfortable to do this. Staff worked closely with the school to lessen the child's anxieties and support a successful move. The child has made significant progress at her new school and is now excited about a holiday that she will soon be going on with her new classmates. High levels of support for children's education leads to children making sustained educational progress.

Detailed preparation takes place in advance of children moving into and on from the home. Managers complete thorough assessments in advance of children moving in, and these carefully consider how the child's needs will be met. The grandparent of a child who has recently moved to the home said, 'He's settled in so well and loves it there. I couldn't have asked for more.' One child who is due to move on from the home has been extremely well prepared for this by staff. The child has lived at the home for a significant period and has built extremely strong relationships with staff. The move is being made at a pace which the child has chosen. The child has been involved in the plan at each stage. Good support when children move into and out of the home helps to lessen children's anxieties and makes each move a positive experience.

Staff provide high levels of support for children's emotional well-being. Children are encouraged to talk about their life experiences in appropriate and safe ways. One staff member has completed training in therapeutic life-story work. The staff member has since engaged one child in regular life-story work sessions over the last year. These sessions have addressed highly sensitive areas of the child's history in ways that have helped them to better understand their experiences. The child's social worker said that the therapeutic work undertaken by staff has contributed towards significant progress for the child.

Children experience a wide range of activities. Many children attend local clubs, including gymnastics, dodgeball, horse riding and swimming lessons. This helps children to lead healthy lifestyles and encourages them to develop positive relationships with their peers. All children attended a holiday in the summer with

most of the staff team. For some children, going on holiday was a new experience, and all children took part in a wide range of activities while away. Children and staff organised an annual summer fete. All children ran an individual stall with staff and raised money for charities of their choice. This helped children to consider their wider community and provided a real sense of achievement for them.

The home environment is equipped to an extremely high standard. There are different communal spaces for children, including a cinema room, art room, and a playroom in which children are encouraged to engage in therapeutic play with staff. There is a large outdoor space which includes play equipment, a football pitch and an allotment. Children contribute their ideas about how the home is decorated. A local artist has provided paintings outside each child's bedroom which are related to their individual areas of interest.

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

Children feel safe and are kept safe by staff who understand the risks to them. A commitment to children's well-being and safety is at the heart of the staff team's practice. Children's risk assessments and safety plans are clear and comprehensive. They provide effective strategies for staff and are updated when new risks or behaviours are identified.

Staff work with external agencies to provide additional help for children in relation to specific behaviours and risks. Staff have encouraged and helped children with some very complex behaviours to engage in one-to-one work with specialists. This has led to a significant decrease in these behaviours.

At times, some children display high levels of physical aggression towards staff. Staff use strategies that are reassuring for children and help them to feel safe at times of distress to manage such incidents. Follow up of incidents both with staff and children identifies learning that can be taken from them and helps to ensure that practice is continually developed and based on what children respond well to. This approach has led to a significant decrease in incidents for some children as staff have built trusting relationships with them that help them to feel safe.

Some incidents have involved the use of physical interventions. These are used appropriately to keep children safe. After incidents, staff seek children's views in ways that help children to think about what happened but also support staff to learn from children. Staff debriefs take place both individually and through reflective sessions, when, as a group, staff consider such incidents and how they can develop their practice. Appropriate use of physical intervention and high levels of monitoring of the records of these incidents ensure that children are kept safe when these measures need to be used.

Staff and managers respond quickly to any concerns about children's safety. There have been some incidents of children making historical allegations, and staff have

reported these to managers without delay. Referrals have then been made to external agencies. However, one incident was not notified to Ofsted.

There have been some instances of allegations being made against staff, which managers have managed effectively. When learning has been identified, it has been clearly addressed with staff. Children are offered high levels of care in such circumstances, for example through one-to-one sessions, and staff ensure that children know they are being listened to.

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

The manager is a highly visible presence at the home. He is ambitious for children. He leads by example, which means that this ambition and his expectations for the standards of care for children filter through to all staff. Children enjoy spending time with the manager and feel able to approach him for help, knowing that he will respond to them.

The manager ensures that children's views are actively sought and given high levels of importance when considering their care. He leads twice-weekly community meetings where children are encouraged to talk about the home and other areas of their lives. These meetings provide a forum for children to recognise each other's achievements. Children's engagement in this process is of a consistently high level. They look forward to the meetings and know that matters discussed will be acted on by managers and staff.

Managers use highly effective systems to monitor the home. Integrated impact assessments are reviewed for children on an ongoing basis. The assessments provide a thorough overview of how children's needs are being met and identify areas for development. The monitoring of plans is highly effective, which ensures that they are accurate and detailed.

The manager welcomes challenge and uses external monitoring of the home to make improvements. Actions identified by the independent person have been acted on. For example, changes have been made to the way that children's meetings are recorded and reviewed, and to the recording of supervision sessions. Effective monitoring and an openness to scrutiny have ensured that staff have provided consistently outstanding levels of care over a sustained period.

Staff are well supported by managers. Regular supervision sessions take place to consider children's needs and how they are being met. Weekly reflective meetings give the opportunity for all staff to discuss incidents that have taken place and any learning that can be identified from these.

Staff undertake a comprehensive programme of training, including in relation to the model of care that they provide. Staff understand this model well and confidently speak of the theory of it and how it translates to direct practice with children. Good training for staff helps to equip them with the skills needed to provide consistently high levels of care for children.

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

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.13)

## **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:** SC025700

**Registered provider:** Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

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

**Responsible individual:** Gary Yexley

**Registered manager:** Charles Lamb

## Inspectors

Joe Cox, Social Care Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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