

SC023636

Registered provider: Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation. It is registered to accommodate up to 10 children. The statement of purpose says that the home is a specialist residential therapeutic community providing therapeutic care and treatment, along with family support, to psychologically traumatised children.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in April 2019.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2020

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: 14 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/11/2018	Full	Outstanding
28/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
12/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children flourish in a warm and nurturing environment. Their relationships with staff are that of a family rather than staff and child. Children are clearly comfortable in their surroundings and approach staff in a natural manner.

The approach to care is informed by the organisation's multidisciplinary team, ensuring consistency across the staff team, therapy and school. Children make exceptional progress in their social and emotional development as a result of the close working of the staff teams, and their understanding of the barriers to learning that the children face. Each child is able to progress at their own pace. Children engage in a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities in the community. This enables them to make new friends and build their confidence.

Children have clear targets which they help to set. Staff support children to work towards the goals that matter to them, such as 'get better at singing'. Because they set their own targets and interests, they engage fully with the support. They experience success, and this motivates them to strive to meet new targets. Staff are positive and committed to children, focusing on the progress they are making. This is evident even in the most challenging of situations; they notice even the smallest achievements and understand that some children may need more time to make progress.

Children's culture and identity are thoroughly explored. The depth and detail in children's plans are exemplary. This allows children to consider their place in their family and what makes them who they are in relation to the town or the region that they are from. Children's history and identity are not lost through being looked after and staff help them to celebrate a variety of cultural events and to understand the significance of these.

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

Children's actions and demeanour in the home show that they feel safe there. They were seen to approach staff when worried, upset or for a chat and to engage in an activity. Children report that they feel safe and they are able to act out and work through their trauma with adults who they sense will keep them safe.

Staff are confident in their role in keeping children safe. They are aware of how to respond to concerns, and who to report them to. Staff practice in relation to safeguarding is excellent. However, not all staff were fully aware of the role of the designated officer in the local authority in relation to safeguarding. Staff are acutely aware of each child's vulnerabilities and history. Through the continued evaluation and reflection of practice, they understand how the children's past experiences of

trauma may impact on their current behaviours. They provide thoughtful interventions in order to help children recover and to make sense of their past.

Children's plans explicitly set out how staff can help and support them through times of distress. Staff are clear that all behaviour is a form of communication, and when it is not known what the child is trying to express, they work tirelessly as a group with the therapy team to try and work this out. The consistent approach to children ensures that children know how staff will respond when they are upset. This helps them feel secure and helps them to know what is expected of them.

The use of physical intervention is closely monitored by the manager. Staff evaluate and reflect on all incidents. They apply learning from this to inform the care they provide to children. As a result, there is a significant reduction of incidents for children throughout their placement.

Staff are extremely vigilant. They notice patterns of behaviour and key events to support children and divert them from escalating challenging behaviours. One child said that she was 'working hard on de-escalation' as she is learning what her triggers may be. Language in records is positive and includes reflection on why the child is behaving in the way they are. The thorough approach to debriefs after incidents ensures that children and staff have the space to reflect and consider if they could respond differently in the future.

Staff are not risk-averse and they allow children to take age-appropriate risks. Children were observed playing in the muddy garden, with staff allowing them to make mess and explore. Thorough risk assessments cover all aspects of the child's life, presentation and vulnerabilities. These plans identify the level of risk and clear safety plans are in place to help children to stay safe.

Children are protected from avoidable risk through regular monitoring of health and safety across the home, and through safer recruitment practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed with a high degree of skill and dedication by the registered manager and two deputies. They are confident in their roles and staff say that they can approach them at any time. The members of the management team are reflective and continually monitor and evaluate the quality of care provided to children. They know the children well and advocate strongly for them to ensure that the best interests of children remain at the heart of therapeutic care practice. They continually improve the service and keep abreast of new approaches to care. The manager's six-monthly evaluation of the home is evaluative and aspirational. The management team recognises a need for change to the monthly monitoring by the independent visitor, to provide the level of scrutiny and challenge they would like.

Staff find their supervisions to be supportive and reflective, improving their skills and knowledge. The training available to staff is targeted to specifically meet the needs of the children living in the home and is firmly related to the therapeutic approach to

care. The organisation has tailored qualifications in place of the level 3 diploma requirement. These are accredited by a recognised university. Staff find the therapeutic approach particularly useful in supporting their care for children. They appreciate the high standards of training available to them and in particular, the opportunity for staff to progress onto a master's level of qualification. As a result, children benefit from a consistent, highly trained and reflective staff team.

Managers are aware of all children's progress, current goals and targets. Staff can appropriately challenge the management team, and feel that the organisation is a safe space to question decisions if they do not understand or agree with them.

The reflective approach to practice ensures that children's needs are held central to all plans. The staff and manager have strong links with partner agencies and are able to challenge decisions effectively if they feel that a child's needs are not being met. A social worker said that 'Communication is always open. All staff are trained to a very high level and their passion for the children is exceptional.'

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

Recommendations

- The policy for the protection of children from abuse or neglect should be available and explained to children and their families as well as to all staff, whatever their role. The registered person must make sure that all staff are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with it, in particular how to use it to report a concern. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.21)

Specifically, ensure that staff understand their ability to contact independently the designated officer in the local authority.

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: SC023636

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: Robyn Bartram

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

Kelly Marchmont, Social Care Inspector

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