

2529785

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local government authority.

The statement of purpose states that the home can provide short breaks for up to five children who have learning disabilities and may also have physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment.

At the time of this inspection, four children were staying for a short break.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2019.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 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: 19 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2021	Full	Good
16/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their short breaks because they are provided with good-quality experiences in a nurturing environment. The care team has a good understanding of the children's individual needs and provides them with sensitive and encouraging care in a respectful manner. As a result, children are learning new independence skills and developing their communication skills, and they enjoy spending time with other children. Most children have communication needs. Staff use alternative methods of communication with children effectively.

Good use is made of children's artwork, photos and pictorial symbols throughout the home. To improve the presentation of the home, a redecoration programme has been started. The manager recognises that the environment is not as homely as she would like it to be. She acknowledges that the lack of soft furnishing detracts from the welcoming ethos and nurturing care that children are provided with.

Children's complex health needs are met exceptionally well. One child has made remarkable progress with his health since returning for short-break stays. The team works successfully with a wide range of healthcare specialists to ensure his complex health needs are met. The child's parent, social worker and healthcare specialists speak highly of the team's flexibility, skills and commitment to safeguarding the child.

Education providers confirmed that the children's attendance is good. They say the staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the children's education targets and support them well in their learning. The team is regularly praised for their positive involvement and effective communication with children's schools.

One child who has a particular interest in cooking is encouraged to participate in meal planning, preparation and cooking. Children are given choices about what they would like to eat and where they would like to sit at the dining table. The manager is actively looking at ways to improve the children's dining experiences. She is working with the team to develop eating support plans. To help children to develop their independence skills further, the manager is introducing opportunities for children to help with laying the table before dinner is served.

Parents are unanimously positive about the support and care their children receive. One parent said: 'They understand and care for our child in the same way we do. We are grateful to have such trustworthy and skilful adults looking after our child. They go above and beyond.'

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

The manager and team prioritise children's safety, health and well-being. Since the previous inspection, there have not been any referrals made to the local authority designated officer or children's services. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and protocols, and they refresh their safeguarding training regularly. Parents say they value the quality of safe care that their child receives.

Children and their parents are reassured and benefit from the manager's careful consideration and good planning before children are introduced to the home for a short-break stay. The manager prioritises the individual needs of children to ensure that when they visit, they stay alongside other children with similar needs and with whom they get along well. Similarly, when children leave, they are provided with a well-planned seamless transition to their new home.

Staff manage children's complex behaviours well. Restraint is not used.

Safer recruitment procedures are robust. The manager ensures that all staff working with the children are vetted for their suitability, experience and skills. Recruitment records are, in the main, well maintained. However, the monitoring of these records has not identified that not all interview notes are scored against the home's set competencies. On one record, the interviewer has not completed the section that requires them to evaluate the candidate's fitness.

The locality of the home is assessed; records inform the staff of potential risks in the surrounding area. However, the manager has not included the emergency service locations or their response times. Moreover, there is limited information regarding the neighbouring school, including potential risks associated to traffic congestion.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The responsible individual and manager are strong and effective leaders. They have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. They set high expectations for their staff, ensuring that every child has a memorable and beneficial experience while in their care. Their commitment to creating a positive and nurturing atmosphere is reflected in the positive progress that the children have made. Their management of the home is appreciated by the care team, parents and other professionals.

The manager sets a shining example for her team; her values and unwavering commitment to providing safe and nurturing care for children are shared by the team. The manager and staff have successfully created a child-centred culture that prioritises the safety and well-being of the children in their care. Children's short-break stays are memorable and positive experiences. One parent said, 'Staff send me a document called "My Story"; these reports inform us what our child has been doing and the progress she is making. The staff go over and above our expectations. I do not have to worry about our daughter when she is not in our care.'

Since the last inspection, three new staff have joined the long-standing team. As part of their six-month induction period, the new staff have completed mandatory training courses. All members of the team are up to date with mandatory training and receive tailored training that helps them understand and respond to the children's complex needs.

The manager ensures that staff receive regular formal supervision, and she ensures team meetings take place regularly. Attendance is consistently good. During these meetings, the team discusses the changing needs of the children and organisational changes. However, records do not reflect all discussions held, and they do not confirm that the team reviews children's targets or learns from management monitoring activities.

The home receives consistently positive feedback from parents, social workers and healthcare professionals. They speak highly of the open and effective communication with both the managers and the staff. This reflects the home's strong commitment to working collaboratively to improve outcomes for the children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the environment that children live in is a homely, domestic environment throughout. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that recruitment records document how the interview panel has assessed the suitability of candidates. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision sessions and team meetings provide staff members with the opportunity to reflect on their practice individually and as a team and to learn from monitoring findings. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

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: 2529785

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Registered provider address: Devon County Council, Chief Executive's Directorate, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD

Responsible individual: Glenn Lobb

Registered manager: Louise Davey

Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

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