

2780149

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This charity-run home provides care for one child aged between eight and 17 years old. One child was living at the home at the time of this inspection.

This was the first inspection since the home registered in June 2024.

The registered manager left in December 2024. An interim manager is overseeing the home alongside the responsible individual. A new manager has been identified. The responsible individual was present throughout the inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 February 2025

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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the home registered in June 2024, one child has moved in. The child briefly spoke with the inspector.

The child has moved several times in the last two years and experienced significant instability. Before moving in, managers met with the child and the child visited the home. Staff have taken time to develop a warm and trusting relationship with the child, including taking him on holiday. Staff are opportunistic in their approach, and they set achievable targets with the child and celebrate their daily achievements. This has helped to increase the child's confidence and independence skills.

The child has made progress in their education. Managers and staff work effectively with the virtual school and alternative education providers. The child has a bespoke timetable that reflects his interests and aspirations. Staff and tutors work together to skilfully support the child's attendance. The staff respond quickly and effectively when the child is experiencing school-related stress.

Staff are attuned to the child's emotional needs. Staff are empathetic and nurturing and understand the best strategies to help the child when they are upset. The child has been supported by staff to increase their emotional literacy and to develop their own strategies to manage frustration.

The child's social worker said, 'Since moving in, they have been able to see family much more often.' Staff listen to the child's views and advocate for them to see the people who are important in their lives. This helps the child to develop a sense of belonging and identity.

The child knows how to make a complaint. When there have been suggestions or complaints from the child or a family member, managers respond thoroughly. Children receive a thoughtfully written letter following conversations with managers. The letters provide reassurance and explain how managers have made any decisions and the outcome. Staff support the child to share their views on their day-to-day care, which has led to changes to the child's plans.

Staff write to the child regularly to acknowledge their kind or positive behaviours. The manager reviews these notes and provides personalised rewards and incentives linked to the child's hobbies and interests.

The home was previously part of a school site. The external appearance of the home is institutionalised. On the day of the inspection, scattered broken glass was seen on the pathway towards the home. This had not been cleared up in a timely way. The home's physical appearance does not contribute to a nurturing, homely environment.

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

The child's vulnerabilities are well understood by staff. Staff demonstrate curiosity about the child's friendships, online activity and the potential for exploitation. Staff are provided with relevant training and information to help them understand child criminal exploitation and to skilfully approach the topic with the child. Staff talk to the child about how to keep safe online and in the community. They sensitively share their concerns with the child and help them to reflect on unhealthy relationships and abusive peer-on-peer behaviours. Consequently, the child has begun to recognise relationships that may be detrimental to their progress.

On two occasions, the child has been considered missing from home. Managers and staff take quick and effective action as outlined in the child's plans to keep them safe. Staff work in partnership with the relevant agencies to protect the child from harm. There is a strong and coordinated response, which reduces the risk of harm to the child.

The child's plans are well written, and they provide clear and helpful guidance for staff. The child's views are incorporated throughout their plans. Plans include detailed information about how best to communicate with the child, including a glossary of language used by the child that new staff may not be familiar with. Any limitations on the child's privacy, such as an external door sensor, are clearly documented and subject to regular reviews of their proportionality.

Staff use a restorative consequence and rewards system to encourage the child's positive behaviour. When there have been incidents leading to damages to the home, the child makes suggestions about how they can contribute to making amends. The child has learned to become more accountable and to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. Staff advocate for the child so that they are not unnecessarily criminalised.

When concerns about a staff member's practice have been identified, managers investigate thoroughly and seek relevant external oversight. New permanent or agency staff are subject to suitable recruitment checks before coming to work at the home, which ensures that staff are appropriately vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager left in December 2024. The interim manager knows the staff and child well and is highly regarded by her colleagues. The interim manager was not present during the inspection; the responsible individual was present throughout. The responsible individual is aware of the challenges this new team has faced, and he is honest and has high aspirations for the child and staff.

Since the home opened, staff have experienced changes in leadership. A small group of committed and consistent staff have provided quality care and stability to the child. This has reduced the potential impact on the child.

Managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There have been periods of staff absence and difficulties in recruiting new staff. This has meant a small group of consistent agency staff have been used and some staff have worked long hours to provide continuity of care. Managers ensure that the staff roster provides a balance of skilled staff that know the child well and those who are new to the home or who have less experience. When agency staff work at the home regularly, they receive supervision with the manager to reflect on their relationships and identify any training needs.

An internal therapeutic practitioner provides support to the staff. Staff value this input. Monthly meetings with the practitioner provide space for staff to discuss the child's progress, alongside reflecting on their own feelings, values and practice. Staff say this input is insightful and helps them to make sense of concepts relevant to their work. This includes compassion fatigue and attachment.

Staff receive effective supervision of their practice. Records of these conversations are reflective, detailed and provide staff with clear actions to develop practice.

Managers have formed effective working relationships with external agencies. A social worker provided positive feedback about the home's communication and quality of care. When there have been delays to receiving local authority plans, or invites to relevant meetings about the child, managers have challenged this appropriately. Following increasing concerns about a child's vulnerability in the community, the interim manager contacted local police to work collaboratively. A specialist worker from the police attended a meeting at short notice to provide relevant information and support.

The statement of purpose and workforce plan do not provide information about the current staffing arrangement, nor do they provide effective oversight of the staff's relevant skills and qualifications.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the following elements of the workforce plan are up to date, accurate and are included in the statement of purpose: (in accordance with Schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20)) the staffing structure and the experience and qualifications of staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.10)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing, homely environment that maintains a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This includes ensuring that any damage to the home is cleared up satisfactorily and without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2780149

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

Registered provider address: Schofield House, Spar Road, Norwich NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Simon Rouse

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Natalie Day, Social Care Inspector

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