

SC030967

Registered provider: Hartlepool Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides accommodation for up to eight children and young people who have learning disabilities. It is owned and operated by a local authority. The manager was registered in April 2008.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 11 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(i)(ii) and (e))	07/12/2018

Recommendations

- Regulations 35-39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. Children's case records must be kept for 75 years from the date of birth of the child, or if the child dies before the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of his or her death. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people who access this provision receive exceptional care. Staffing levels for each child and young person are one to one, unless higher levels of supervision are required due to individual vulnerability.

There is an excellent range of stimulating activities that the children and young people can access during each visit. Activities are planned in the home or out in the community depending on each child or young person's preference. Wheelchair ice skating, cinema trips, meals out, cultural festivals, parks and theme parks are just a few of the activities

that children and young people have enjoyed. Planning for short-break stays is done via consultations with children, young people, parents, carers and social workers.

The home is warm and inviting, creating a comfortable environment with a home-from-home feel. Each bedroom is equipped and decorated to individual taste. All bedding and belongings are personal and individual to each child and young person during their stay. This helps children and young people feel secure.

The adults that care for the children and young people are caring and committed. They dedicate their time to supporting children and young people helping them to develop trusting relationships and friendships. The support offered to families goes beyond caring for children and young people during their short-break stay. Outreach support is provided to those families who require additional support. Staff go above and beyond what is in their remit to ensure that children and young people benefit from their input. This helps children and young people to make excellent progress because of staff's consistent approach.

One parent commented, 'This place is a Godsend. The staff are so caring, and I wouldn't trust anyone else with [Name]. Without their input I don't know what I would have done. They help in whatever way they can. If they could be judged above outstanding, then they should. Absolutely superb.'

There is exceptional care planning pre-admission and beyond. Child appreciation days help the staff to get to know children, young people and their families prior to any planned stays. Impact risk assessments are completed to enable the registered manager to effectively plan short breaks taking into account the mix and group of children and young people.

Photographs are taken when children and young people are seen to enjoy themselves. This helps families to see how their child has benefited from their stay at the home. The use of photographs is also used to capture moments when children and young people achieve. When children and young people leave the provision, their time spent at the home is celebrated in a special way. Memory books are developed to collate the special memories of time spent at the home.

Key-worker sessions are carefully planned and monitored to track progress. By linking achievements to their education targets, children and young people receive certificates, which they take great pride in taking home to their families. In addition, 'WOW moments' sheets are completed by staff when a child or young person achieves or develops a new skill. Progress, regardless of how small, is well celebrated and praised.

The home has an excellent ethos relating to education. Staff work hard to develop children and young people's learning, independence and self-care skills in line with their abilities. Children and young people make significant progress in all aspects of their lives. For some young people, this has meant that their communication skills have significantly improved. For others, their progress has been around eating, sleeping and general participation with their peers.

Children and young people are at the centre of everything that the home does. The views of children and young people are regularly sought with a variety of tools and aids that are suitable to each child and young person's ability. This includes Makaton and the

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Team meetings provide opportunities for the staff team to discuss the views of children and young people in detail and ensure that continuity of care is provided. This enables children and young people to enjoy and benefit from their short-break stay.

The home continues to drive improvements forward. Staff recognise that communities and society continually change. There is a strong culture in the home to celebrate differences. The staff and children and young people were planning to celebrate the festival of Diwali at the time of the inspection. A senior member of staff takes the lead to research and make links with organisations in the area. This has included making connections with places of worship and groups such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans association in the area. The staff are very proactive at keeping updated on cultural and diversity issues to enable them to respond appropriately to equality matters of children and young people if they emerge.

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

Risk assessments and risk management systems are of an excellent standard. Children and young people do not experience bullying. High staffing levels and proactive actions taken by the staff help children and young people to build positive relationships and prevent incidents of bullying or isolation. The staff team works hard to help children and young people to be respectful to each other. The innovative use of visual stimulation, such as the 'pinky promise tree' and the 'safe hands', allows children and young people to develop an understanding of respect for one another.

The staff team practices a playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy model. Staff do not apply sanctions. Alternatively, children and young people receive points as rewards for good behaviours, which are traded for a gift of their choice. Rewards can involve going for walks, picking meal choices, or engaging in an activity. These opportunities help build and develop positive relationships further. They also encourage positive behaviour.

The use of physical intervention techniques is at a low level and only used as a last resort to protect children and young people from harming themselves or others. The preferred choice of managing negative behaviours is via de-escalation techniques.

There is an excellent safeguarding culture within the home. Safeguarding is a stand-alone agenda item discussed in team meetings and supervisions. Excellent safeguarding procedures ensure that staff know exactly what to do if there were concerns for a child or young person's welfare. Most serious incidents have been notified to Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate; however, the inspector found one incident that had not been reported. The correct action and procedures had been followed in addressing that safeguarding concern.

There is effective work undertaken with children and young people to help protect them. E-safety learning, anti-bullying and appropriate behaviours are taught to children and young people. The staff use inventive and creative ways to ensure that each child and young person receives support to help protect them regardless of ability. Learning tools are adapted. PECS is just one tool used to aid that learning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is passionate and inspirational. She is supported in her role by an experienced deputy manager and highly effective staff team. Collectively, they share the same values and ambitions for children and young people. Their enthusiasm means that children and young people receive nurturing and consistent care.

The staff team receives regular supervisions and appraisals. Such forums enable the staff to consider safeguarding concerns and planning around children and young people. They also provide opportunities for professional development.

The registered manager effectively plans training for the staff team. One week in September is set aside to dedicate that time specifically for training purposes. All mandatory training is up to date. Additional training undertaken includes attachment, whistle blowing, how to write positive reports, varying courses related to autism and much more. This demonstrates the registered manager's ability to create a skilled workforce. Her team feels well supported and motivated as a result.

The registered manager and staff team work effectively with a number of professionals to ensure that the very best care is provided. A professional commented, 'I cannot believe how much progress [Name] has made in such a short space of time. Staff go above and beyond. Their input doesn't just help the child, but the family as a whole. They help families stay together.'

The registered manager demonstrates sound insight into the home's strengths as well as areas that could be further improved. Her motivation and enthusiasm are highly effective at sustaining and driving improvements forward. She is developing a new project and has brought in bank staff to assist. They are currently going through inductions and training. There is also a stable staff team supporting new recruits. The registered manager has been astute in her recruitment process and understands the benefits to having a workforce that has varied skills and experience. As with any new development, there will be teething problems and learning. For example, some records have not been signed to show accountability. The registered manager has excellent monitoring systems in place and there is evidence that she has addressed this issue with staff.

Practice in the home is very much built on evidence-based research. The registered manager delegates specific projects to her senior staff team in order to implement positive changes in practice. One senior staff member is a moderator for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network education programme and is able to develop these aspects in the service. Another senior member has developed communication packs for children and young people. Others have developed ways to track behaviours and progress.

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: SC030967

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, Durham TS24 8AY

Responsible individual: Danielle Swainston

Registered manager: Sylvia Lowe

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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