

SC036186

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home under short break arrangements. It provides care for up to eight children and young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities, including sensory impairment.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

Due to COVID-19, at request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

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: 21 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/10/2019	Full	Good
04/10/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/05/2018	Full	Good
01/11/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The highly dedicated staff team provides exceptional care. As a result, all children have positive experiences and make excellent progress. During the pandemic, the service has offered emergency full-time placements while continuing to provide the well-established short breaks provision. The members of the staff team have adapted to these changes very well. They have shown great resilience, working creatively and flexibly to support children and their families.

The members of the staff team pride themselves on building long-term, supportive relationships with children and families. There are excellent working relationships between staff and families. Some children have been accessing the service for several years. Children have formed very positive attachments to staff. These strong attachments enhance children's self-esteem and support their personal development. One parent said: 'I wouldn't trust anyone else; the staff know my children so well.' Another parent said: 'It doesn't bear thinking about where I would be without this service.'

The communal indoor and outdoor areas are very well decorated, colourful and welcoming. Children have access to a wide range of toys and play equipment. Children enjoy and benefit from this space. Bedroom furnishings and decoration are carefully planned around children's individual needs. As a result, the home environment is nurturing and children feel comfortable.

Staff understand the importance of individualised care planning. Children's care plans are exceptionally well written, ensuring that staff have a thorough understanding of each child's preferences, routines, personal care needs and communication methods. There is extensive evidence of children's specific communication systems being used very effectively in and around the home. A social worker said, 'Care planning is excellent and is worthy of wider dissemination.'

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

Staff work tirelessly to ensure that children are safe. Highly effective risk assessments and risk management plans promote children's safety. Children are supported whenever possible to take safe and appropriate risks in line with their care plans and developmental needs.

Staff respond well to risks associated with children's behaviour. Children's safety plans are fully adhered to. This means that most incidents are quickly de-escalated by staff. When physical intervention has been necessary to ensure the safety of children, there is always a careful evaluation of practice so that staff can try to

understand the reasons for the behaviour and prevent reoccurrence. Staff regularly revisit their training in this area, supported by two qualified trainers within the staff team. In addition, the members of the staff team share behaviour management approaches with families. The staff have successfully undertaken outreach work with families. This has reduced risks to children in their home environments.

Staff undertake a broad range of good-quality training in safeguarding matters. Safeguarding themes are further explored with staff through supervision and team meetings. As a result, staff know how to recognise, report and act on any safeguarding concerns that they may have.

Staff understand the importance of meeting children's health needs. There is a well-managed system for administering and recording medication safely. Children's mental health needs are also fully addressed. For example, when one child required additional support to address a complex mental health need, the commitment of the team was exemplary. The team adapted quickly to revise the child's safety plans so that risks were minimised, and there was excellent consultation with specialist mental health services.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers are inspirational, confident and very competent. They create a culture of high aspiration for children and have high expectations of staff. Staff and managers have advocated exceptionally well for children. For example, they ensured that one child, who moved to the home as an emergency placement, had access to the services that they needed. Staff provided intensive support to the child, ensuring that the child was kept safe and was well cared for.

Managers are empathetic to the life experiences of children and understanding of the challenges that the families have faced during the pandemic. Managers have responded positively, proactively and creatively to the additional demands placed on their service during the pandemic.

The manager is committed to continually improving the service. For example, staff have recently received input on sensory modulation and have quickly introduced new sensory intervention plans for children. Gathering user feedback is a strength of the service. There are extensive feedback forms that enable the manager to have a comprehensive understanding of the views of children, parents and other agencies.

Staff morale is high. Staff say that they are well led by the manager and that they receive very good support. Staff say that their training helps them to meet the needs of children. The manager ensures that staff feel valued, and he encourages them to take on developmental skills through additional learning. As a result, staff are confident and knowledgeable.

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: SC036186

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Derbyshire County Council, County Offices, Matlock
DE4 3AG

Responsible individual: Patsy Burrows

Registered manager: Mark Nichol

Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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