

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>13/01/2016</b>                                    |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC036186</b>                                      |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                          |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                               |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Derbyshire County Council</b>                     |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>County Hall, Matlock,<br/>Derbyshire, DE4 3AG</b> |

|                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Beverley Milway</b>     |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Vacant</b>              |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Katarina Djordjevic</b> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>13/01/2016</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>improved effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>None</b>                   |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                               |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Outstanding</b>            |
| The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care. |                               |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Good</b>                   |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Good</b>                   |

**SC036186**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is outstanding because:**

- The progress and experiences of children and young people are outstanding. This is because they receive an excellent standard of individualised care from a truly committed and skilled staff team. Parents, carers and a range of professionals have confirmed this.
- Children and young people really do benefit from receiving short-break services from a staff team who work very hard to increase their life experiences and enable them to become as independent as possible. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff who they feel safe with and enjoy being with. A parent commented, 'The home is a fantastic place, my son thoroughly enjoys going and participating in all the activities. He counts down to each session.'
- The voice of the child is at the heart of practice. Staff are very skilled at communicating with children and young people and as a result they are empowered to make choices and decisions about their daily lives as well as their futures.
- Children and young people really enjoy their stays, as having fun and learning is embedded in day-to-day practice. They have access to a range of experiences and activities that they wouldn't normally be able to engage in. This is due to the commitment of staff and their ability to challenge barriers.
- The management of behaviour is very good. The emphasis is on de-escalation, diversion techniques and positive reinforcement. Restraint is not used often, only ever when absolutely necessary. This is testament to the skills of the staff team.
- Partnership working is a key strength with staff recognising the importance of communication and collaboration with parents, carers and professionals to ensure children and young people's holistic needs are met.
- Areas for improvement include producing individual risk assessments for children and young people who go swimming and the signing and dating of records.

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

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Children's home staff should take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child's needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. This is with specific reference to producing individual written risk assessments for children and young people who go swimming. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.7.)
- Ensure that children's case records are be kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (The Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations including the Quality Standards April 2015, page 62 paragraph 14.3.)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is provided by a local authority. It is registered to care for up to eight children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities, including sensory impairment, under short break arrangements.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 12/03/2015      | CH – Interim    | improved effectiveness |
| 31/12/2014      | CH – Full       | Good                   |
| 19/03/2014      | CH – Interim    | Good Progress          |
| 10/09/2013      | CH – Full       | Good                   |

## Inspection Judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| <p>Children and young people receive an excellent quality of individualised care which is due to the commitment and skills of the staff team who only want the best for them. They make good progress given their starting points and their abilities and disabilities. They benefit from a range of different experiences and staff challenge barriers to enable them to access ordinary life opportunities. For example, young people with mobility difficulties have been on a train and a young person has gone in an inflatable pool in their wheelchair.</p> <p>Admission to, and transition practices from, the home are based on individualised needs and are very good. Matching of needs is a priority to ensure that children and young people using the service at the same time are compatible. Parents and professionals have confirmed this. A parent commented about her child that staff: 'Seriously take on board children she will be more suitable amongst, and those not suitable would not be allocated a place on that day.' The following comment was received from a professional, 'Children's visits are linked with an appropriate peer/friendship group, with consideration given to safety.'</p> <p>Children and young people really enjoy using the service. A young person with very limited verbal communication told the inspector that he was happy at the home and liked the staff. Comments received from parents also confirm that their children enjoy using the service. These include: 'He always looks forward to his visits'; 'He's always talking about staff, never said any bad comments about any staff' and, 'My son is safe, well looked after and joins in stimulating activities which are person centred around his needs and wishes.'</p> <p>Staff produce very detailed care plans and risk assessments in consultation with parents, carers and a range of professionals. Records are reviewed regularly although some are not always signed and dated by the author. A professional made the following comment in response to what they thought is good at the home, 'Individual care planning and attention'.</p> <p>Empowerment and enablement of children and young people is top priority. Staff are skilled at communicating with them and provide a range of different communication aids to ensure individuals are able to express their views and make choices. Staff are also very skilled at interpreting non-verbal communications and behaviours. The inspector observed staff supporting a young person to choose the colour scheme and items for their bedroom; he was shown colour charts for the paint and used the internet to choose his bedding and other items for their</p> |                    |

bedroom. He was very pleased with his new items which staff purchased the following day. He was empowered not only to make choices but also to express his individual identity. Children and young people have also contributed their views and wishes in what would be their 'dream home' (short break service).

Parents and carers retain overall responsibility for their child's health. Staff work very closely with parents, carers and a range of health professionals to inform their practice. This ensures children's and young people's physical and psychological health needs are met. Clear plans ensure staff meet individualised health needs and they obtain all relevant information, such as looked after children's health plans and copies of letters from medical professionals. Some children and young people have complex health needs. Detailed plans for specific needs, such as feeding, moving and handling, have been produced in consultation with health professionals. These plans along with the provision of specific training for staff, ensure they are clear about how to meet individualised needs in a safe, sensitive and dignified manner. Emphasis is on communicating with the child or young person at all stages to enable them to feel included in the procedure.

The management of medication is good, including effective monitoring systems. This helps to ensure health needs are met and that children and young people are kept safe.

Staff consider education and learning as a priority. They work closely with school to ensure children and young people get the best from their education, and learning continues within the home. They are given every opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge based on their abilities. For example, some young people learn to bake. As a result, they acquire social interaction and independence skills while at the same time having fun. Their confidence and self-esteem also improves.

Staff are truly committed to ensuring children and young people are able to pursue their interests and hobbies as well as enabling them to try new activities. The home has lots of games, toys and a sensory room. Children and young people also access a wide range of leisure activities in the community. As a result, they benefit in many ways. For example, they enjoy and have fun; their social interaction skills improve; they become more confident and they become part of the wider community. Comments received from parents include, 'Activities are tailored to his needs. His independence is always encouraged' and 'Staff go out of their way to do activities my son enjoys.'

The physical environment, including the facilities, are designed to meet the needs of children and young people. Staff work very hard and are creative in making the environment comfortable and child-friendly. Staff have decorated bedrooms with themed murals based on individuals' interests. For example, one bedroom is decorated on a pirate theme. Bathrooms are also decorated with murals to ensure bathing is a relaxing and enjoyable experience for children and young people.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Safeguarding children and young people is embedded in day-to day-practice. Staff receive a range of safeguarding training including training specific to working with children and young people with disabilities. They fully recognise the vulnerabilities of the individuals using the service. Practice and systems protect children and young people while at the same time enabling them to take assessed risks based on individualised needs in a safe and supportive environment. As a result, they feel and are safe. Parents and carers confirm that their children are safe.</p> <p>Staff are very good at managing children's and young people's behaviour. This is because staff know them well and understand triggers that affect their behaviours. Firm and consistent boundaries and the effective implementation of de-escalation and diversion techniques leads to improvements in behaviours. Restraint is only used as a last resort and records give clear details of what happened and the outcome. Good behaviours and achievements are recognised and praised which helps to improve children's and young people's self-esteem. Staff also work closely with parents and carers to help provide support for families and provide consistent boundaries. A parent commented, 'Good behaviour is always praised. Staff are trained in SCIP (a behaviour management technique) so I have no worries about his aggression towards them. They have assisted me in SCIP training which also helps out at home. His behaviour and aggression is very minimal at present.'</p> <p>Incidents of children and young people going missing are rare due to high staffing levels and a secure building. Nevertheless, staff are clear about their vulnerabilities and protocols are in place to follow in the event of a child or young person going missing. The new manager has recently met with the local police to discuss the service and the general needs and particular vulnerabilities faced by children and young people with disabilities. This partnership working further protects them from the risk of harm and abuse.</p> <p>The effective management of health and safety by staff helps to keep children and young people safe and secure. Fire safety practices take into account their disabilities. For example, individualised personal emergency evacuation plans in are place.</p> <p>Robust recruitment practices help to protect children and young people from the risk of harm and abuse. They also ensure that staff employed have the right skills and understand the particular vulnerabilities of children and young people with disabilities.</p> |                 |

Individualised risk assessments are in place and give clear details about how to manage risks. There are also a range of generic risk assessments for different activities. However, more specific risk assessments are not completed in relation to children and young people who go swimming. A recommendation has been made to address this.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The registered manager left in December 2015 and a new manager has been appointed. The new manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted. She has many years of working with children and young people with disabilities, including previously working at the home. She has a level 4 in working with children and younger adults and has applied to access the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She already has a good grasp of the home's strengths and needs and demonstrated a real commitment during this inspection to improving the service and working with the regulator.</p> <p>This is a well-managed home where the ethos is on empowering and enabling children and young people to reach their potential and have enjoyable experiences. There is a well-established staff team with the majority of staff having worked at the home for many years; this ensures consistency of care. Staff are well-trained and are committed to improving the lives of children and young people. As a result, they receive very good individualised care. This is confirmed in comments made by parents and carers including, 'The home is a wonderful home, staff are great with my child' and, 'The staff are fantastic especially my sons link worker. He goes out of his way to ensure my son's stay is positive.'</p> <p>Staff benefit from clear leadership and direction and an inclusive management style. They feel listened to; their views count and they feel valued. They receive regular supervision and staff told the inspector managers are always available for advice and support. Daily handovers ensure staff keep up-to-date with individuals' current needs. Staff meetings are used effectively to discuss children and young people's care; the running of the home and staff development. Team development days have taken place since the last inspection focussing on the new quality standards and regulations and team building.</p> <p>There is a clear statement of purpose which informs parents, carers and key stakeholders of services provided. Practice is in line with the statement. For example, staff make every effort to enable all individuals to express their views and make choices. Welcome packs and children's guides are produced to meet the</p> |                 |

communication needs of children and young people.

Managers and staff carry out a range of internal quality assurance and monitoring systems. Shared responsibility and ownership ensures shortfalls are identified and actions taken promptly and inform future developments. An independent visitor undertakes monthly visits and copies of the reports are sent to Ofsted as required.

Staff recognise the importance of, and are fully committed to, working with parents, carers and a range of professionals to ensure children and young people's holistic needs are met. Feedback from parents and professionals confirms this. A health professional told the inspector that staff are excellent at communicating with her and her team resulting in a 'joined up' service for children and young people.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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