

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 and is supported by two qualified and experienced deputy managers.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2023

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 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2022	Full	Outstanding
21/10/2019	Full	Good
04/10/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have positive experiences during their stays, and they have fun. Staff are skilled in using the resources of the home and wider community to provide these positive experiences. Children experience many opportunities that may not have been possible without the short-breaks service.

Staff have an exceptionally good understanding of children's needs. As a result of this, children quickly settle. A parent said: 'My son loves coming here. At first, he didn't want to come. Today, he said he would walk here and wait outside for it to open.' The staff team is experienced and adept at offering a holistic care package. This support is not solely confined to the time the child spends at the service. Staff work above and beyond in their roles to ensure that children are supported in many aspects of their lives. This support takes place while at the short break, at family homes and in the community.

The home has supported a child and family in crisis very well. For this child, this has been critically important. They have been safe, and they have had their needs exceptionally well met. Staff are supporting the child's family through this difficult period. Staff are heavily involved in next steps planning and they are advocating for children all in their care. The staff team has worked flexibly and covered additional shifts to ensure minimal impact on other children attending for short breaks. This has enabled all children to be cared for by people who know them well.

The communal indoor and outdoor areas are playful and colourful. Bedrooms are planned around children's individual needs. Staff have fully embedded sensory processing to children's plans.

Children experience a variety of activities and opportunities that they may not necessarily have while being at home. Children have fun with staff and each other both inside the home and during community-based activities. Staff support children to attend important appointments such as hairdressers and medical appointments.

Children and staff access child and mental health services in a variety of ways to support improved outcomes for children. This support is accessed regularly and ensures a holistic approach to meeting children's needs.

Staff are experienced in understanding the impact of medication on children. Staff are proactively involved in medication and health reviews. For some children, medications reviews have led to reduced use or cessation of medication.

Feedback from parents and carers is exceptionally positive. There are excellent working relationships between staff and families. One parent said: 'Staff are invested in all of the children. They want what is best for them. I feel very lucky.'

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

Staff understand children's risks. Risk assessments and care plans are thorough. They include all known behaviours for each child and detail the best way to respond. These plans are live, working documents and are referenced in staff handovers. As a result, staff are continually aware of risks and how to keep children safe. These care plans are exemplary.

Restrictive practices are used only as a last resort. These are planned and reviewed and relevant agencies are notified when these are used. Recording is clear and risk assessments reflect planned restrictive practices. From children's starting points, the need for physical intervention is quickly reduced.

Staff understand the importance of meeting children's health needs. There is a well-managed system for administering and recording medications in a safe and controlled way. The manager provides detailed reviews of systems following any queries in relation to medication.

Staff work in partnership with other professionals to keep children safe. This includes across all areas of health, education and social care. The working together arrangements with other services are exceptional.

Recruitment processes are robust and designed to ensure that children are kept safe. Written references are always followed up with verbal verification. Recruitment processes ensure that only suitably vetted people are recruited to work at the service.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager and deputy managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children. They create a culture of high aspiration and positivity and have high expectations of staff.

Staff are advocating exceptionally well for one child and family who is placed in an emergency placement at the home. Managers have led the team to work flexibly to respond to the needs of children and families. This includes extensive support with transitions to ensure that the staff always keep the child safe and well.

Team meetings are taking place and offer opportunities for staff to discuss key issues relating to individual children. Staff access support via reflective meetings with CAMHS.

Staff have received regular supervisions and there have been useful discussions about children's care plans and actions moving forwards. Staff have been supported to share their views in supervision. Staff morale is exceptionally high, and staff report excellent support from managers. A staff member said: 'In all my time

working as a residential care worker, I've never known a management team go above and beyond for their team like they do.'

The manager is clear about the ethos and model of care that he wishes to promote across the home. For example, staff have received training on sensory modulation and have continued to embed this into practice. It was impressive to see how this has been implemented as a total holistic approach for children. Training is clearly planned and in place to continue to upskill and develop the staff team.

The staff form a cohesive, positive staff team. There is evidence of high regard for each other and the children they work with. Communication between the staff is excellent and clear. This ensures that children are receiving safe and consistent care.

Professionals were unanimously positive about the service. An independent reviewing officer and social worker both independently said: 'They do a great job and offer a lifeline to children and families.'

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: Derbyshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Luke Impey

Registered manager: Mark Nichol

Inspector

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector

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