

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.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 October 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/05/2018	Full	Good
01/11/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/09/2017	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children thoroughly enjoy their stays at this short-break service. Staff know the children well because they spend time with children and their parents prior to the child staying at the home. This means that children settle quickly because staff have already built up a positive relationship with the child and their family. Good matching processes for each child means that group dynamics are considered to ensure that each child gets the best experience from their stay.

Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with children. A parent said: 'I never have to worry when my child is with them.' Staff attend multi-agency meetings and visit the child's school. This enables staff to share their knowledge of the child, contributing to their overall care and education.

Children make good progress in the home. An external professional said: 'Staff have made a real difference.' Staff are creative in the ways they work with the children. For example, during the summer holidays, when the service was temporarily closed, staff undertook a range of outreach work to support the children and their families. This allowed staff and children to maintain contact, allowed staff to sustain relationships with families and gave children opportunities to try new activities in the community.

Individual and detailed care and safety plans for each child lead to good, consistent care. The plans include communication needs, likes and dislikes and strategies for behaviour management and support. Plans are current and relevant to the child. They are regularly updated and shared with the team, other professionals and the child's family.

Detailed positive experience books contain photographs and notes to help prompt memories. They are child-centred and show a wide range of activities and experiences that the children have enjoyed.

The emotional and physical health needs of children are thoroughly understood. Staff liaise with mental health professionals to ensure that they provide children with the right support. Medication is safely stored and appropriately managed. Children's emotional and physical health is very well supported and promoted.

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

Staff keep children safe, and consequently children feel safe. Staff have a good understanding of procedures that help to protect children. Allegations against staff are managed quickly and fairly and protect children from unsuitable adults.

Staff provide a consistent therapeutic approach and demonstrate a good knowledge of the risk-management plans for each child. Risk-management plans clearly address and help to reduce known risks. Children do not go missing from this home, but good procedures inform staff should a child go missing.

Children are supported and rewarded to be kind and helpful. Clear and consistent rules and boundaries are implemented that help children to feel safe and secure. When the behaviour of children escalates because they feel anxious or upset, staff remain calm and use de-escalation techniques well. Staff have a good understanding of why children behave in the way they do. Creative strategies are discussed within the wider multi-agency team and are specific to the needs of each child.

Staff receive training in physical intervention, but restraint is rarely used. On the occasions that it is necessary, the least restrictive hold is used for a minimum amount of time.

Children know that they can talk to staff and staff listen. They are supported to make complaints if they are unhappy with the service. One child made a complaint to the local authority about the closure of the home over the summer. He received a thorough response that helped him to have a better understanding of the reasons behind the closure.

Vetting procedures help to protect children from unsuitable adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is new to the home and is providing management cover while the registered manager is away from the home. He is currently applying to be registered with Ofsted. The manager has previously been registered with Ofsted and is experienced in managing a short-break home. The new manager has started to implement a good action plan to address identified shortfalls and move the home forward to provide a better service for children.

The management team makes child-centred decisions. For example, careful consideration is given to which children can stay at the same time, ensuring that children enjoy their stay and benefit greatly from the experience.

The established team of staff is very caring towards children and wants to provide the best care for them. They deliver a high-quality service to children and their families. They build warm and trusting relationships with children and children respond well to them. Most staff are qualified and very experienced. New staff feel welcomed and well supported by the team and managers.

Staff work with children on at least a one-to-one basis. There is always an extra member of staff to ensure that children always have plenty of adults around to help and support them.

Disruption to the service during the summer has been managed well. A parent said: 'They found creative ways to support us. In a difficult situation, they really stepped up.' For example, some children were taken on holiday by staff and others had several trips out. Some children were able to continue their short-break stays at another home.

Staff have access to a range of training, including training that specifically meets the needs of children in their care, such as autism spectrum disorder, mental health and epilepsy. This means staff have the knowledge and skills to care for the children effectively.

Managers and staff work closely with external professionals and parents. This ensures that children's short breaks are fun and well planned for children, and parents can relax knowing that their child is being well cared for. A parent said: 'I don't feel like I'm doing it by myself. They are invested in him almost as much as I am.'

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: SC036186

Provision sub-type: children's home

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

Responsible individual: Mary Wilton

Registered manager: Lisa Marsh

Inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

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