

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. It is a short-break service for disabled children. It provides care for up to eight children who have a learning disability, a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

Three children had short breaks on both days of the inspection and were interacted with as part of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

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: 5 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2024	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
11/01/2022	Full	Outstanding
21/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children who have complex learning needs enjoy exceptional experiences at this home. The children benefit from having their short breaks in a large and spacious home. They have the freedom to choose various areas to explore safely, such as soft-play areas and sensory rooms that are decorated and equipped to meet their specific needs.

The staff are very dedicated and committed to the children. Many staff members have worked at the home for a significant number of years. Over time, they have gained vast experience and knowledge. This consistency in the staff working at the home has led to care practice that provides children with very high-quality care. Consequently, children flourish.

The staff create a warm, loving and nurturing environment where children are safe, and all their needs are very well catered for during their stays. Children remain central to everything that the staff do, ensuring they enjoy positive and enriching experiences that contribute to the children achieving outstanding outcomes.

Staff know the children very well and are attuned to their individual communication needs. Children communicate with vocal noises, through actions, symbols and pictures. The staff have ensured that communication aids are located throughout the home. This allows the children to make their wishes and feelings known, and staff ensure that their voice is heard.

Children access a wide range of activities, both locally and further afield. Should staff identify barriers that would hamper a child's ability to experience an activity, they work hard to reduce these so children remain included in society. These varied opportunities help children to improve their confidence and support them to develop social skills.

Children have continued to make exceptional progress. This is a result of the approach of the staff and their ability to break down tasks into small steps. Staff then work with the children, and slow and steady progress is made. The overall outcome for children is highly significant. For example, a child went from being fearful of going on a bus, to now being able to use it and access new places. Time has been taken to support children to increase their independent living skills, which is invaluable for children now and as they progress into adulthood.

Staff provide outstanding support to families, consistently going above and beyond to anticipate and address potential challenges. Their proactive approach ensures that families feel supported, even in unexpected situations. For instance, they step in to

assist with school transport when arrangements are not yet in place and offer support to children and parents during medical appointments.

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

Staff are proactive at keeping children safe. The nature of the children's complex needs means that they have no or little sense of danger and always require close support from staff. Staff can determine and pre-empt risks to the children and what they need to do in order for children to remain safe.

Children's complex health and behavioural needs mean that there are frequent times of upset, distress and behaviour that can be challenging for staff and others. However, there has been a very low level of incidents over the last year. This is a direct result of staff knowing the children so well and being able to be highly responsive when children start to become heightened.

Staff use their deep understanding of each child, combined with strong and trusting relationships, to de-escalate situations before they require physical interventions. By recognising the early signs of children becoming heightened, they create a safe and supportive environment. This proactive approach ensures that children can regulate their emotions. As a result, incidents requiring physical intervention remain low.

Detailed behaviour support plans are in place. They outline all areas of risk specific to each child. These plans equip staff with clear and effective strategies to respond appropriately, ensuring they can confidently manage challenging situations. Through their expertise in promoting positive behaviour, staff consistently apply a proactive and nurturing approach. This then creates a safe and supportive environment for all the children.

Staff safely administer medication to children. All staff who dispense medication have received the appropriate training. There is clear management oversight, including daily and weekly audits. As a result of the systems in place, there have not been any medication administration errors.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is aspirational, dedicated and forward thinking. He is supported by knowledgeable and committed deputy managers. The managers are passionate about creating opportunities that promote children's progress and have a clear vision for the children in their care. They are proud of how the members of the staff team have significantly influenced and enhanced children's lives.

The manager has exceptional working processes alongside quality assurance mechanisms. The manager's oversight of the home allows all information to remain up to date. If needed, the manager will chase the local authority for key documents, ensuring that his team is always equipped with the most up-to-date information.

The manager has worked hard to develop and sustain excellent relationships with all involved in the children's lives. He advocates for the children and their families and takes time to contact professionals on their behalf. In doing this, he hopes to reduce some of the stress and anxiety that parents experience when working with several external agencies.

The staff receive regular supervision that helps them in their role. The managers take time to provide support to staff within supervision and identify any learning needs they may have. Team meetings are held on a monthly basis, and the managers have begun to share examples of good practice for staff to reflect on and discuss. The team minutes would benefit from fuller recording so any staff not at the meeting can have a full overview of what was discussed.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive from the leadership team. One member of staff said, 'The management team are exceptional, providing clear guidance, encouragement and leadership, which helps us all to perform our roles to the best of our abilities.' Staff very much value the approach and steadfast support of the management team, and team morale is exceptionally positive.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that there is sufficient detail in the team meeting minutes so any absent members of staff can be fully updated when reading these. This will ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures and are up to date regarding the needs of the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 7.18)

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: County Offices, Matlock DE4 3AG

Responsible individual: Luke Impey

Registered manager: Mark Nichol

Inspector

Lizette Watts, Social Care Inspector

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