

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036186
Inspector	Amanda Ellis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Derbyshire County Council
Registered person address	County Hall Matlock Derbyshire DE4 3AG

Responsible individual	Ian Johnson
Registered manager	Lisa Jayne Marsh
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	31/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good children's home with outstanding practice in the provision of quality of care. Children and young people receive nurturing, attentive care from the dedicated team of staff who look after them.

Comprehensive assessments combined with highly personalised care plans effectively shape the provision of short breaks care in response to each individual's needs.

Staff and management provide a safe, secure and healthy environment that welcomes families and carers. Regular health and safety checks ensure that the home is risk-free and well maintained.

Young people's health, social and educational needs are consistently met. This maximises health and potential learning outcomes.

Parents and professionals report a high level of satisfaction with the levels of care given to young people.

Three requirements are made following of this inspection. These relate to improvements to the interior of the home, the replacement of outdoor play

equipment and additions to the Statement of Purpose. Two further recommendations concern the need for improved monitoring by management and an increase in the frequency of fire drills. These shortfalls do not have an adverse impact on the care of young people.

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
19/03/2014	Interim	good progress
10/09/2013	Full	good
03/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
28/06/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	the registered person shall compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as "the statement of purpose") which shall consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. This relates specifically to the inclusion of information about the missing child policy in the Statement of Purpose (Regulation (4)(1) and Schedule 1(10))	06/02/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2)(e))	06/02/2015
31	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by	06/02/2015

(2001)	children are equipped with what is reasonably necessary, and adapted as necessary, in order to meet the needs arising from his disability of any disabled child accommodated in the home so as to enable him to live as normal a life as possible. This relates specifically to the outdoor play equipment. (Regulation 31 (2)(f))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. This relates to the need to maintain an overarching record of, and monitor the uptake of, staff training and supervision. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Outcomes for children and young people improve because of the contribution that the short breaks service makes to their development. One parent talked of her son's improvement and said 'They understand his needs and this means he is doing tremendously well. The visits promote his development, learning and overall well-being.' Another parent said 'My son has surpassed my expectations. He is learning all the time. This service is essential for his development.'

Children and young people benefit from wide-ranging social opportunities. They enjoy a variety of purposeful activities within the home including a sensory room, soft play room, ball park and play equipment. Additionally, they extend their social skills through social and leisure activities in the local community. They enjoy trips to places such as outdoor activity centres, adventures parks, indoor climbing walls, theme parks and the seaside. They routinely have the opportunity to socialise and meet with other people through going swimming or on walks, trips to the park, shopping trips and visits to places of interest. Children and young people are empowered because, using a range of communication methods, they are able to contribute ideas and choose their preferred activities.

Children and young people benefit from continuity of care and communication between the service, home and school. This helps them to achieve their educational potential. Daily communication is maintained with the children and young people's schools throughout their short breaks through the use of communication books. This means consistency of care is promoted at all times.

Children and young people enjoy improvements in their physical, emotional and psychological health. Parents and staff collaborate to ensure all health care planning accurately meets individual health needs. Additionally, staff liaise with relevant health agencies and professionals. Children and young people are supported to learn about their health and are encouraged to develop an understanding of issues such as good personal hygiene and healthy eating.

Children and young people benefit from formal and informal opportunities to develop age appropriate knowledge and life skills. Independence skills are encouraged with all children and young people. The level of task varies according to the ability and understanding of the individual. For some, this might include choosing their clothing and helping to get themselves dressed. For others, it might include tasks such as managing their pocket money, learning about road safety and using public transport. Regardless of the individual child's ability, staff consistently encourage children and young people to expand their self-care and life skills. Consequently, over time it is possible to see that from their starting points young people make significant progress with their independence skills. These positive outcomes build confidence and

effectively support personal development.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children and young people are able to develop and progress because the quality of care is exceptional. They benefit from caring and nurturing relationships with members of a dedicated and well-established staff team. Staff have a detailed understanding of each of the children and young person's individual needs. They strive to support children and young people to achieve their optimum individual outcomes. Children and young people thrive because of the quality of the care they receive.

One parent said of the service 'It is my view that the service is outstanding.' Another said of the staff 'The staff are brilliant. They do this not just as a job - it is a vocation. I know this because it reflects in my son's behaviour. When he returns from a visit his happiness shines through; he is relaxed, calm and contented.' Strong, trusting relationships with families ensure a holistic approach to the support needs of both children and young people and their families. This means that the service responds quickly and flexibly to requests for accommodation, including extended stays, and support for families in crisis. Parents and social workers confirm that some families would struggle without this support and that the service is responsive to the changing needs of children, young people and their families.

A particular strength of the staff team is how well the staff work with parents, agencies and social work services. This has provided children and young people with consistency of care and stability both in planning short break provision as well as transition planning for those moving over to adult services. Staff advocate on behalf of children, young people and their families to ensure that they receive the best possible service in response to their changing needs. Parents unanimously praise the staff and managers for their unwavering and steadfast support.

Children and young people have a range of complex health and medical needs. Parents, staff and health professionals ensure health care plans provide detailed and up-to-date information about children and young people's health care needs. This information ensures clarity so that staff are able to provide personal care sensitively and in a dignified manner. Medication and accident reports are clearly recorded and well monitored. Procedures for the transfer of medication between school and home are robust, thus minimising the opportunity for mistakes at any stage in the dispensing process. Staff are trained in first aid and the administration of medication. This ensures staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to competently manage health care issues. Parents and social workers confirm that clear communication ensures that parents and professionals are fully informed of any health-related

concerns or incidents.

Special dietary requirements related to health, medical or religious requirements receive sensitive attention. Children and young people enjoy a healthy and varied diet that takes into account their preferences and wherever possible they are involved in the planning and preparation of meals. Some children and young people are supported to have a communal mealtime. This improves their social skills and promotes interaction with their peers. Some children and young people are not able to eat or drink by mouth. In such cases, staff have the relevant training to ensure safe gastrostomy feeding. High standards of cleanliness and hygiene, underpinned by appropriate training, ensure that food hygiene and food preparation are of an excellent standard.

The physical design and layout of the short break service is good and fully adapted to needs of children and young people. This ensures that children and young people with physical disabilities are able to move around freely and allows unrestricted access for young people who use wheelchairs. A comprehensive range of facilities includes adapted bathrooms and bedrooms with overhead and mobile hoists. The unit has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, with wall displays showing children and young people's artwork. However, despite the best efforts of the staff to maintain the home's appearance, the interior is in need of a thorough redecoration and refurbishment. The exterior of the home benefits from a safe play area with a range of play and sensory equipment. These facilities provide stimulation and considerably improve children's physical and emotional experiences. However, some of the play equipment is in need of replacement. Exposure to the elements has meant that some bicycles and tricycles are rusty.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Safeguarding children and young people is a paramount priority of this home. The staff team are well trained and highly competent in safeguarding issues. While safeguarding issues are rare, where appropriate staff and managers work closely with social care and safeguarding teams to progress and monitor child protection plans. Effective relationships with the Local Authority Designated Officer and safeguarding teams ensure safeguarding issues are dealt with in a timely manner. This ensures children and young people are protected from harm.

Parents, carers and social care practitioners confirm that the home ensures the safety of children and young people. Wherever possible, children and young people have said they feel safe in the home. The absence of safeguarding concerns is testament to the service and their effective safeguarding practice.

Each child and young person receives highly personalised care, which respects their privacy and dignity and meets their complex needs. Some children and young people are reliant on staff to take care of all of their personal care needs. Rigorous planning

ensures safe care both within and outside the home. Equally, robust planning and risk assessments safeguard children and young people on trips away from the home. This ensures that children and young people are protected from potential harm and are not exposed to risks.

Behaviour management techniques are highly effective. Staff have a detailed awareness of the individual needs and potential triggers for children and young people. They use a range of methods including distraction, de-escalation and redirection to manage behaviours. Consequently, the use of physical restraint is minimal. Staff are trained in approved methods of physical intervention. They are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to de-escalate situations. The recording of such incidents is in line with regulatory requirements.

Consistent levels of support and supervision within the home ensure all activities are closely monitored. Incidents of children or young people going missing from care are exceptionally rare. Since the last inspection, there has been one incident of a young person having an unauthorised absence from the home for a short period of time. Staff and managers have a detailed knowledge of how to respond in such circumstances. Staff have easy access to, and knowledge of, the relevant changes to the legislation and guidance on missing from care. Effective implementation of policies and procedures ensures the continuing welfare and safety of children and young people during their stays.

Young people are protected from coming into contact with unsuitable people because all staff undergo robust recruitment and vetting checks, details of which are kept in the home so that the manager is assured of their suitability. Visitors are checked, vetted and monitored.

A robust approach to health and safety, which includes risk assessments and regular checks of the premises and equipment, ensures that children and young people are kept safe. Fire safety is a priority. Fire safety equipment is serviced regularly and fire drills, involving children, young people and staff, are organised at periodic intervals. However, increasing the frequency of fire drills would strengthen evacuation procedures by ensuring that all staff, children and young people understand what to expect in the event of a fire and are able to evacuate the building safely.

Leadership and management

good

A competent and capable Registered Manager manages the home. She is supported by two experienced and dedicated deputy managers. The manager was first registered for this post in 2009. She holds a National Vocational Qualification at Level 4 in Leadership and Management and a Registered Managers Award. She also has childcare and management experience in a residential setting. This means that she is suitably qualified and experienced to manage the service effectively. All of the management team are enrolled to undertake the Level 5 Diploma. This means that

they continue to ensure that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver high quality care.

The Registered Manager has good understanding and oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and incorporates these into the development plan. The home's development plan sets out both short- and long-term aims and objectives. It is regularly reviewed and reflects practical measures to drive forward improvement.

Regular mandatory training ensures that the care team are equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the changing needs of the children and young people and the changing requirements of the short breaks service. However, monitoring by management of staff attendance on statutory training is not wholly effective. This means that the manager cannot easily confirm that their competence and qualifications remain up to date. However, additional specialist training, focusing on particular children and young people, ensures individual needs are met.

Staff are well supported. They receive regular formal supervision as well as informal needs-led supervision. Staff confirm that the management team are approachable and supportive. Annual appraisals identify areas for practice development and further training. Regular team meetings routinely address a range of organisational, staff and operational issues.

Staff levels at the home enable staff to provide one-to-one care where stated in care plans. The commitment of the staff team, demonstrated by their flexible approach to meeting the demands of the rota, ensures that the needs of all of the children and young people are reliably accommodated.

The Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and clear. It does not, however, contain sufficient information in relation to missing from care procedures. The short break service provides an accompanying children's guide, in a variety of formats, summarising key elements of the service provided for children. Care practice fully accords with the local authority's established online policies and procedures for children's residential services.

The Registered Manager routinely monitors and analyses the effectiveness of the service. Quality assurance reports on behalf of the provider are produced on a monthly basis. This means that there is rigorous scrutiny of the home and that any shortfalls in provision are identified and addressed. This provides an additional level of quality assurance that ensures that children and young people receive a consistently high standard of care.

Notifications of all significant events relating to the protection of children and young people in the home are sent to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken as required.

Based on its performance since the last inspection and the manager's understanding of outcomes for young people, the home demonstrates a strong capacity for continuing improvement

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.