

SC036262

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The age range is 11 to 18.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 October 2017

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: 8 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Staff and managers provide young people with an outstanding quality of care. This has contributed to young people making excellent progress since living at the home.
- Young people now attend school, college or training provisions, and they enjoy their learning experience. This is excellent progress from their starting points.
- Staff promote positive relationships between young people and their families. The manager maintains excellent relationships with families, keeping them well informed about progress.
- The emotional well-being and mental health needs of young people take priority. Excellent collaborative work with partner agencies helps to address these needs.
- Young people benefit from excellent relationships with nurturing and supportive staff. These relationships demonstrate mutual respect, care, support, and humour.
- Young people are safe. Staff understand young people's vulnerabilities and take highly effective action that ensures their safety.
- Staff manage behaviour well, without the need to use sanctions or physical intervention. Restorative methods of behaviour management have proven to be highly effective.
- Behaviours that place young people at risk, such as self-harm, have decreased, and young people report that this is because of the care and help from staff.
- The registered manager provides excellent leadership and direction.
- A settled and motivated staff team provides an exceedingly high standard of care to young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Good
23/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement
06/08/2015	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make excellent progress in all areas of their development. This is due to young people receiving outstanding care from committed and nurturing staff. The relationships between staff and young people are strikingly positive, and fundamental to helping young people feel happy, settled and content with their lives. One young person said: 'There is so much support from staff here. This is more than just a job to them.' Young people have experienced very unsettled lives before coming to live at the home. This has been particularly evident in education. Young people are now experiencing consistent and predictable care from adults they feel able to trust. This has helped them to move forward and make progress. One young person said: 'Being here with everyone so welcoming, no-one judges you; people dedicate their time to helping us.'

Young people have made remarkable progress in education. For some young people, at the point of moving to this home they were not in any form of education. Young people had experienced significant disruption to their education. The manager and staff have persevered, and worked in partnership with schools and training providers. Now, all young people are attending school or college, or they are in training. One young person has passed four GCSEs and is now preparing to attend college. Young people's attendance in education is excellent. The manager and staff instil a clear, strong ethos that encourages all young people to attend school or college. A good care routine ensures that young people are ready to learn. Staff celebrate the achievements of young people. It is commonplace for the manager and staff to tell young people how proud they are of them. Consequently, young people have developed self-confidence and are proud of themselves.

The manager and staff work in partnership with agencies who help young people with their mental health and emotional well-being. Young people get the help and support they need through very well-coordinated work between staff and community child and adolescent mental health services. This has been particularly effective in reducing the number of incidents of young people self-harming. Additionally, staff meet on a very regular basis with a psychologist who provides them with the opportunity to take part in reflective group discussions. Staff appreciate and value this opportunity. This benefits young people as staff are better informed and more aware of the emotional needs of young people.

The manager and staff demonstrate very effective practice in working with families and other people of significance to the young people. The manager speaks to parents regularly. He makes sure that arrangements for family meetings are in place, and that contact is positive and safe. Staff understand the emotional impact of family relationships. They make themselves available to support young people regarding any concerns or worries they may have about their families, and they provide this support in a sensitive way.

Young people receive very good support to integrate into their local community. They take part in community activities, which increases their self-confidence. For example, young people play for the local football team. Staff take young people to training sessions and watch them play football at weekends.

Young people regularly visit the local gym and take part in various fitness training activities with staff. This integration into the community has improved young people's ability to interact with others and develop socially aware behaviour. Young people's self-esteem and confidence grows.

Young people are proud of their home and remain central to all the decision making. Young people's meetings take place regularly and are well attended. They set the agenda and discuss matters that are important to them. They make positive suggestions about the decor of the home, suggest trips and activities, and can raise any concerns. Young people know how to complain, and have a professional, independent of the home, who they can contact if required. In this home, the voice of the young person is respected and valued.

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

The safety and well-being of young people take precedence for the manager and staff. Young people have become increasingly safe because of the dedication of staff and the quality of care provided. Staff are not complacent, and they demonstrate a good awareness of risks and vulnerabilities. The manager and staff produce very detailed safe-care plans. Plans are adjusted to keep young people safe, and are updated regularly.

Young people feel safe. One young person who has previously self-harmed acknowledged the reduction in this behaviour. He said: 'Initially, when coming to the home I was harming every day and now I've almost stopped.' The young person reported that the help from staff has contributed to reducing this behaviour. He reported that he can talk to staff if he is feeling vulnerable, and stated: 'They will take me out and spend time with me to prevent the harm.' Young people do not go missing because they spend time with staff and they enjoy this time together. Young people do not engage in risk-taking activities such as drug or alcohol use, and staff know where young people are at all times. Staff act as any good parent would, with vigilance and consideration. This is why the relationships between young people and staff are so strong.

The manager and staff maintain a strong ethos around managing behaviour positively. They do not use physical intervention or sanction young people for poor behaviour. The manager and staff believe that physical intervention is contrary to creating and maintaining a nurturing environment. When the behaviour of young people falls below an expected standard, they work with the young people restoratively. This helps young people to understand the implications of their behaviour, and make amends. The manager and staff have demonstrated patience and perseverance in this approach, and now behaviour is generally very good. Young people are a credit to the staff. They behave considerately, and they are respectful and thoughtful. This will help them enormously in adult life.

This home maintains a stable and consistent staff team. Staff enjoy their work, which aids staff retention. When the manager recruits new staff, he ensures that there is strict adherence to the organisation's safe recruitment policy. This helps to keep young people safe by minimising the likelihood of harm from those caring for them.

The manager takes swift and decisive action following any incidents deemed as significant.

The manager ensures that Ofsted receives notifications immediately. He oversees a robust reporting process so that all information is gathered and analysed. All agencies are informed, and any actions agreed are fully implemented. The manager ensures that procedures are followed, and he ensures that any learning from incidents is used to inform and develop staff.

Young people's safety is of central importance. The staff and manager carry out detailed, personalised risk assessments. These assessments describe the vulnerabilities of young people. They set out the actions that staff should take to keep young people safe. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of each young person, and can spot any signs indicating that the risk to a young person has increased. Staff then take decisive action. This flexibility and adaptability of staff practice, and adherence to risk assessments, has helped to keep young people safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A suitably qualified registered manager leads the home. The manager shows clear and decisive leadership. He has a philosophy and a vision for the home which are shared by staff. The manager and staff are achieving this vision. The inspection history of this home has, at times, been poor. The improvements seen since the new manager took over have been remarkable. He receives support from an equally dedicated, experienced and committed deputy manager. They work together effectively, and benefit from the guidance and support of the senior operations manager.

The home has remained settled and stable. Since the last inspection, one new young person has moved into the home. The manager and staff carried out very good pre-admission work to be confident that they could provide the best possible care to the young person, while not disrupting the progress made by other young people. The views of young people were canvassed before the new young person moved in, and any anxieties they had were addressed. Staff ensure that they meet any cultural or religious needs, including dietary needs. An example of this is ensuring that a young person who was being admitted to the home could attend a mosque. The independent reviewing officer for the young person wrote: 'Since moving placement he has blossomed under the care and nurture of the home.' The manager will only accept new young people moving to the home when he is certain that staff can fully meet their needs, and that the stability of the home is not disturbed, which can disrupt young people's progress.

A motivated and stable staff team provides the best possible care to young people. Staff report that they enjoy coming to work and feel supported by the manager and deputy. They report that managers are always available to them, and are a visible presence. They report that the manager has excellent people skills, and they feel valued by him. Professional supervision takes place regularly, and this provides guidance to staff. The training and developmental needs of staff are a high priority. Staff attend all the core training they need to provide good, safe care. Staff have mutual respect for each other, and value the contributions of all. The atmosphere in the home is one of warmth, positivity, and sense of fun.

The manager has a good understanding of the individual plans for all young people. He has developed a range of management tools to monitor and collate data in order to evaluate the progress that young people make. This data provides valuable information for the manager and staff. The manager shares these tools with young people, and this shows them the progress they have made since moving to the home. Of particular note was a young person who created a 'life tree' with the help of staff. This enabled the young person and staff to reflect on how much progress she has made. The young person can treasure this lovely and striking piece of work.

The manager has not received any complaints from young people or from others. In contrast, there are a range of compliments from professionals about the staff and the work undertaken in the home. These included a compliment from a visiting service manager: 'Great stuff, super joint working in relation to supporting a young person settle into life at the home and with staff.' Another professional noted: 'I have come away with a very good impression of the young people, and the good work done by the staff.' Many other very positive comments highlight the positive work undertaken at this home, to the benefit of young people.

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: SC036262

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG

Responsible individual: Mary Wilton

Registered manager: Richard Jackson

Inspector

Phillip Morris, social care inspector

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