

SC036262

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to 3 children who experience emotional and social difficulties.

There were 3 children living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspector observed all 3 children and spoke to 1.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2019.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 2026

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: 22 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2025	Full	Outstanding
19/12/2023	Full	Outstanding
16/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
25/01/2022	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff understand the importance of children feeling that the home truly belongs to them. They have worked tenaciously to create and maintain a warm, homely environment. The house is filled with photos celebrating children's memories, and bedrooms are personalised in line with each child's wishes. The garden is used for growing vegetables and playing football, supporting children's interests. This nurturing environment promotes children's sense of belonging, identity, and importance within the home. The manager also has further plans to enhance the living environment, including a new kitchen and an additional shower room, demonstrating a continued commitment to improving the home for children.

Staff consistently prioritise and champion children's education creating a culture where learning is valued, celebrated and seen as achievable for every child. Children are making exceptional educational progress which includes 100% attendance, plans to sit GCSE's and taking part in extracurricular activities. When one child was at risk of losing their college place, the manager demonstrated determined and meaningful advocacy. They responded creatively, sourcing and funding an alternative education provision to ensure the child maintained structure, routine, and learning opportunities. This proactive approach enabled the child to remain engaged in their education while longer-term arrangements were finalised. As a result of this strong advocacy, the child successfully retained their college place and has continued to make positive educational progress.

Staff actively support children to spend safe and meaningful time with their families and other people who are important to them. They work creatively to remove practical and structural barriers, including finding solutions that enabled a child to have overnight family visits when this was at risk. This helped the parent feel valued and reassured, and strengthened the child's relationship with their family. Staff also promote children's friendships by welcoming friends into the home for visits and overnight stays. This has led to children being invited to friends' homes and one child invited on holiday with a friend's family. These actions strengthen children's relationships, build their sense of identity and belonging and support them to develop positive, lasting connections into adulthood.

Staff are dedicated to ensuring children's health and wellbeing are promoted and are creative and tenacious in achieving this. They make appropriate referrals for specialist assessments, enabling all professionals to gain a clearer understanding of children's needs and plan holistically. The manager has also shown strong and consistent advocacy, which resulted in one child accessing bespoke, creative wellbeing support, including weekly coding sessions and a creative mentor. These opportunities have strengthened the child's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Staff understand the critical importance of preparing children for adulthood. They take a personalised approach to planning for children's independence. For example, when

supporting one child to move into a new home as they approached adulthood, staff recognised early that the child needed an extended and tailored transition. Managers negotiated effectively with the placing authority to secure this additional support, including continued help from staff after the child leaves. They also supported the child with the emotional aspects of the move, treating their aspirations with genuine respect and arranging an overseas holiday to help them realise their dream of travelling abroad.

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

Staff deliver care through a therapeutic approach which is underpinned by an understanding of children's lived experiences and emotional needs. A child said 'the staff are nice; I can talk to about my worries. There is nothing I would change. I feel safe here'. A professional recognised the trusting relationships a child had developed with staff was significant progress. They highlighted the child was now able to share their voice and talk about their worries. Through these trusting relationships staff create an environment where children are supported to build resilience which strengthens their wellbeing and sense of safety.

The manager leads with optimism and purpose, creating a culture where positivity is intentionally woven into everyday life in the home. Managers recognised that much of the children's positive behaviour was going unnoticed, and in response, introduced 'positive incident reports. The manager explained that the aim was to 'flood the home with positivity'. These reports are shared with children to celebrate their achievements and reinforce positive experiences.

Staff provide clear expectations to children which are predictable and thoughtfully tailored to each child. This helps children feel safe and secure. Staff adopt a strength-based approach to behaviour where emphasis is on encouragement and meaningful reward rather than consequence. This creates an environment where children's growth is inspired through encouragement and celebration.

Staff demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the children's needs, vulnerabilities and complexities. The strong, trusting relationships they build with children, combined with their therapeutic approach, ensure that children remain safe. There have been no incidents requiring children to be held by staff, no episodes of children going missing from the home and no allegations made against staff. Staff are well trained and confident in how to respond should the children's needs change.

Managers demonstrate a proactive and transparent approach when responding to external concerns about staff practice. They act swiftly and decisively, including following advice from safeguarding agencies. While concerns are being investigated, the manager ensures that measures are in place to safeguard children and that appropriate support is offered to staff. Once the concerns are fully understood, managers work with staff to strengthen and improve their practice. This approach is helping to create a culture of accountability where learning is prioritised and children are effectively safeguarded.

Staff have created plans to help keep children safe which are regularly reviewed. A child recently developed behaviours that required safeguarding intervention. Staff acted to protect the child. However, learning from previous incidents was not fully embedded and did not strengthen subsequent responses. Nor were all plans consistent with what action staff should take. In response, managers have reviewed the child's plans and taken action to strengthen them, ensuring staff understand what they need to do.

The manager informs safeguarding agencies when serious incidents occur. On one occasion, there was a delay in notifying Ofsted. This was an isolated incident. All other notifications to Ofsted have been submitted within expected timescales.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers hold high aspirations for children and understand that achieving positive outcomes requires a proactive and forward-thinking approach. They anticipate children's needs and take action without waiting for direction, demonstrating strong advocacy that truly makes a difference. Their commitment is meaningful and has a positive, tangible impact on the lives of the children in their care.

Managers have developed excellent working relationships with professionals which means there is a consistent and effective network of support around each child. This support provides exceptionally well-coordinated care for children.. One social worker spoken to said 'the communication is outstanding.'

Managers have systems in place to oversee the care provided to children and ensure that feedback is iteratively and meaningfully sought from children, their families, staff and professionals on the care provided. Managers use this feedback to inform regular reviews and updated evaluations of the care provided to children. For example, children's views are regularly shared and used with purpose to support and challenge staff's practice and inform learning in staff meetings.

Managers work hard, with real tenacity, to build and sustain a culture that promotes a growth mindset across the staff team. They have revised the supervision framework so that it now supports staff to reflect not only on each child's vulnerabilities and needs, but also on the emotional labour and impact of the work. Staff describe feeling part of a family and genuinely enjoy working with the children in their care. This positive culture has contributed to a stable and established staff team, as staff feel valued and want to remain in their roles. As a result, children benefit from consistent care provided by adults who know them well, helping them to feel safe, secure, and understood.

Managers support staff development exceptionally well. Training is closely aligned to the needs of the children and also enables staff to pursue additional, relevant qualifications. Managers have also recognised that staff may require extra support as a child prepares to move into independent living in adulthood. They have thoughtfully planned time for staff to explore the feelings of grief and loss associated with this transition. This proactive and compassionate approach ensures staff have the knowledge, skills, and emotional resilience needed to care for children effectively and keep them safe.

Managers have systems in place to ensure that there is regular communication with staff. On occasion, managers have communicated with staff about children by sending messages to staff on their personal mobile phones. This information has not always been anonymised.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure all children's records are kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. This includes the protection of children's personal information when using methods of telecommunication. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', Page 62, paragraph 14.3).
- The registered person should ensure staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and follow the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, plans must include details of the steps staff will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. This includes ensuring coherence between all plans designed to manage risk ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards', Page 42, paragraph 9.5).

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: SC036262

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Stuart Beresford

Inspector

Laura Copus, Social Care Inspector

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