

SC039038

Registered provider: Leicester City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority and is registered to provide care for up to seven children and young people who have learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 February 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: 12 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/07/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	30/04/2019
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This is with regard to ensuring that all staff receive well-coordinated and regular supervision at frequencies defined in the home's supervision procedure.	30/04/2019
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	30/04/2019
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. This is with specific reference to keeping the record in the form of a register showing details in respect of each child, up to date. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b) Schedule 4 point 1)	30/04/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
This is with specific reference to ensuring that all references are verified and that this is recorded.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good home with some outstanding features. The quality of care children receive is very good. However, some shortfalls identified during this inspection have the potential to affect the delivery of care.

Children are happy, safe and make good progress given their starting points. This is because they are supported by a skilled and committed staff team. Staff know the children very well and only want the best for them. Children benefit from positive and trusting relationships with staff.

Some children's care plans and risk assessments do not always include important information. Some care plans and risk assessments are not updated after reviews and sometimes they contain conflicting information. Records are not always signed and dated. However, there was no evidence that these shortfalls have had an impact on children's care as the staff know the children very well. These shortfalls do have the potential to cause confusion and could have an impact on how care is provided, particularly for new staff.

Transitions for children to and from the home are managed very well. Planning for transitions takes account of the children's needs. Consideration is also given to children's previous experiences and those of their families. Staff are proactive in challenging transition teams to ensure that children receive appropriate and timely support in their transition to adult services. However, despite the best efforts of staff, children approaching 18 years of age do not always receive timely support. For one young person, the staff have been instrumental in ensuring that their transition to adult services was as smooth as possible. Communication from staff with the young person's parents and all relevant professionals, including the new placement, has been excellent. A social worker said, 'Staff were amazing. Staff really invested in making the young person's transition work and staff worked really well with the new provider.'

Many children have complex health needs. Staff are well trained and work in tandem

with a range of health professionals. This helps to ensure that children's health needs are met and that they can access ordinary life experiences as much as possible.

Empowering children is a priority. Staff have a range of communication skills based on children's individual needs, and these skills include interpreting what children are communicating through their behaviour. The skill of the staff team helps all children to have a voice. Children become more confident and they feel safe.

Staff work very well with schools to ensure that children have the best opportunities to reach their potential.

Children are provided with a range of leisure experiences, which provide opportunities to have fun and enhance their confidence and social skills. Children are able to participate in activities that they have not had the opportunity to experience before.

There are plans to improve the physical environment, which means major refurbishment. This is in recognition that some areas and features of the home look institutional, despite the best efforts of staff to make it homelier. Children's bedrooms do not present as institutional and they reflect children's interests, personalities and behavioural needs.

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

Keeping children safe is integral to the care provided and, as a result, children are well protected. This is because staff know the children very well. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities in safeguarding children. Any concerns regarding the safety and well-being of children are reported immediately to the relevant professionals.

Children are supported to take controlled risks and develop their skills in a safe and supportive environment. This helps to build their self-confidence and enables them to have ordinary life experiences wherever possible.

Staff are skilled at interpreting and managing children's behaviours. Staff recognise the importance of working closely and consistently with a range of professionals. This helps to ensure that children do not cause any harm to themselves or others through their behaviour. Over time, children's behaviour improves.

Recruitment practices are generally good. Managers prioritise finding the right person above filling the vacancy. However, there is not always recorded evidence that references have been verified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home has gone through significant management changes since the last inspection. Additionally, there has been unusually high staff turnover. There is no evidence that these staff changes have had any direct impact on the quality of care that children and families have received. However, management support systems and monitoring systems have been affected.

A new manager was appointed in March 2018 and was registered with Ofsted in October 2018. He has many years' experience of working with children with disabilities, has management experience and is suitably qualified. He is very committed to improving the lives of children and has a vision for the home. The majority of requirements made at the last inspection have been met. However, because of vacancies in the management team up until very recently, the requirement regarding staff supervision has not been fully addressed.

Staff have not received regular supervision in line with the home's policy. However, staff said that they feel supported and that the management team is approachable. There are other forums within the home, which allow staff to regularly discuss children's care and discuss any difficulties.

Because of vacancies in the management team, some monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying shortfalls. This includes shortfalls in care records as identified during this inspection. Additionally, the admission and discharge register is not always completed as required by regulation.

Partnership working is a real strength and helps to ensure that children receive the care and support they need. Staff are good advocates for children and their families. One teacher stated that the communication from staff at the home is 'brilliant'. This teacher made the following comment about staff, 'It is clear to see that they all care about the young person and have high expectations for his future.'

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: SC039038

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Leicester City Council

Registered provider address: City Hall, 3rd Floor, Rutland Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ

Responsible individual: Michael Evans

Registered manager: Christopher Haines

Inspector

Katarina Djordjevic, social care inspector

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