

SC060034

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a registered charity and provides short breaks for up to six children at any one time. The children who use the service have learning disabilities and may also have associated physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 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: 13 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
04/01/2023	Full	Good
20/07/2021	Full	Good
11/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of the inspection, five children were staying overnight for their short breaks. Four children contributed to this inspection. The service is currently supporting 18 children in total.

Children benefit from excellent resources and facilities, including a large garden containing accessible play equipment. The grounds are divided into two clear, free access areas, meaning children can access outside activities of their choice. This supports children's physical exercise and well-being. Children enjoy indoor climbing frames and hammock swings. There is an exceptionally well resourced sensory room for children to enjoy tactile and calming activities.

Some of the children's bedrooms are themed and brightly decorated to create an exciting environment, whereas others are designed to be calm, relaxing spaces. These support children's individual needs and preferences.

Children make exceptional progress. Children with significant needs enjoy a wide range of life experiences they would not have been able to experience without staff. These include caravan holidays, theme parks, music festivals, horse riding and zookeeper experiences. Trips are meticulously planned and executed to meet children's specific needs. For many children, this is the first time they have been able to enjoy these experiences.

One parent felt unable to take their child on leisure activities due to worries about the community. This parent has since accompanied the child and staff on a visit to a big city to see a show, using public transport. This enabled the parent to feel confident enough to take their child on further trips and an overseas holiday without the support of staff. This has had a profound impact on the child's experience outside the family home.

Children are supported to gain independence skills in line with their individual plans. Some children have been supported to develop their personal care skills to a point where they now require minimal support from others. For two children, this has made a substantial difference to their family's ability to care for them. This has allowed these children a level of dignity as they have got older.

Children are sensitively helped to manage life events. One child was supported to have a haircut after a significant period of not being able to manage this. The staff supported the child to have their hair cut by a local barber, first with staff and then with their parent. This has allowed the child to have regular haircuts away from the home. This has had a significant impact on the child, who no longer experiences distress during haircuts. This will have a lasting impact on the child's life when they no longer access the service in adulthood.

The home is refitting one of the bathrooms with a large, sensory whirlpool bath. The flooring in children's en-suite bathrooms has high levels of wear and tear from water and requires maintenance or replacement.

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

Children receive consistent care and support. It is rare that dates for children's stays are changed. All children receive the package of support that has been agreed during the referral process.

The staff support children during periods of family crisis. The manager ensures that there is capacity to ensure that children and families receive their short breaks during times of crisis. Parents and professionals said that the short-break service is the reason for children remaining at home.

Children with complex communication needs are supported to have their voices heard. Staff have the skills and training to enable them to communicate with children in line with children's specific communication needs.

The staff plan the dates of children's visits. This planning goes beyond considering staffing needs and the safety of children to stay together. Children are supported to share their views in relation to the group dynamics. Staff support children to identify which other children they enjoy spending time with, the activities they prefer and the bedrooms they like to stay in. Leaders consider this information alongside children's risk assessments when planning the diary. This ensures that all children can thoroughly enjoy their stays.

The manager recognises that disabled children may have limited opportunities to make choices. Staff practice supports children to make choices as much as possible, through the use of communication aids and objects of reference.

The home is set up and personalised every day for the children who are coming to stay. Children have visual tools and social stories to help them to understand the routine, how many nights they are staying and where they are going the next day. There is a visual board showing children the staff working with them during their stay. Children are seen to use and interact with these displays on their arrival at the home, demonstrating that this is a routine that they now understand.

Children and staff are supported to understand children's emotions and behaviours through the use of a specific framework. The home recognised that this framework was often being used in children's educational settings. The home identified the need to be working consistently for children across settings. Staff attended training and workshops in relation to this framework and have worked exceptionally hard to embed this framework into the ethos of the home. Each child has individual resources that have been specifically selected to support that child to regulate their emotions. These resources are accessible to children when they come into the home. The children select

their resources from their identified shelves. Staff further support children with their emotions by using key phrases with children that are clearly identified in children's individual plans.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a highly experienced and committed registered manager. The manager is supported by an equally skilled deputy manager and a highly involved responsible individual. Managers lead by example. As a result, staff are also committed and skilled.

Leaders and managers maintain an exceptionally high level of managerial oversight. They review all the records in an analytical way. Good consideration is given to patterns and trends, and action is taken to prevent recurrence.

Staff said that they are supported by managers to deliver the best possible care to children. There is a high level of staffing at the home. There is always another member of staff working in addition to staffing levels determined by children's needs. This enables staff to work one-to-one with children while the additional staff undertake administration, meal preparation and cover staff breaks. As a result, children are supported by staff who are rested and able to fully focus on engaging with them.

There have been improvements in staff retention. The manager follows safer recruitment processes and has strengthened these processes further. The manager is clear in his expectations for staff, and this starts from the recruitment process. Children are involved in the interview process for potential new members of staff. The manager assesses candidate's interactions with children and uses this assessment alongside professional interviews to ensure their suitability to work at the home.

The manager ensures that the staff have the skills and training that they need to be able to support children with complex health and communication needs. There is a balanced mix of new and experienced staff on each shift. There are a high number of staff who hold the relevant childcare qualification. Other staff are working towards this qualification within the required time frame.

All staff are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the service. Daily, weekly and monthly monitoring contributes to the manager's oversight. The manager ensures that all staff are aware of their individual responsibilities and fulfil them. This provides the manager with excellent oversight of the children's progress, and the areas of strengths and weaknesses in the home.

The manager has met the one recommendation raised at the last inspection.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that where possible, the children's home is a homely, domestic environment. In particular, the flooring in the children's bathrooms should be maintained to an acceptable level and replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC060034

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Break

Registered provider address: Schofield House, Spar Road, Norwich NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Daniel Lummis

Registered manager: Peter Willson

Inspector

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

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