

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>10/11/2015</b>                                                    |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC060034</b>                                                      |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                          |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                               |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Break</b>                                                         |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>Davison House, 1 Montague Road, SHERINGHAM, Norfolk, NR26 8WN</b> |

|                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Hilary Richards</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Melanie Julier</b>  |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Ashley Hinson</b>   |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>10/11/2015</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Improved effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                   |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                               |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                   |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                               |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Requires improvement</b>   |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                   |

## SC060034

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- The young people benefit from positive and rewarding short breaks.
- A staff team who know them well cares for the young people. They see the purpose of the service as being more than providing families with a break.
- The staff are now receiving regular supervisions.
- There are good relationships with families who feel part of the service.
- The home has effective working relationships with social workers and safeguarding professionals.
- External professionals are positive about the quality of care provided.
- The young people make progress within the home.
- The young people engage in a wide range of activities that they may not experience otherwise.
- Careful planning takes place when young people first come to the home.
- When young people move on from the home, staff support the transition.
- Shortfalls and areas for improvement include risk assessments in relation to activities and combined care, capturing the views of young people and clarity in the overview of staff and young people who have experienced a fire drill.
- The service does not routinely capture the views of young people following physical interventions.
- Management monitoring processes have not been sufficiently effective and do not fully contribute to improving the quality of care.
- The use of the building by staff external to the home impacts upon the homeliness of the environment.
- The staff have not received training in safeguarding disabled children.

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

### 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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Due date   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, in particular regard to risk management, the registered provider must ensure that:</p> <p>(2) (b) the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. This is with particular regard to risk assessing activities.</p>                                                                                                                                                    | 01/12/2015 |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular regard to reviewing the quality of care, the registered provider must ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2) (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 15/12/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure of control, discipline or restraint, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (b) (i) (ii) (c))</p> | 01/12/2015 |

### Recommendations

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

Ensure that the children's home is a homely, domestic environment. This is with particular regard to the use of the premises by staff external to the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)

Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. This is with particular regard to ensuring that staff keep personal evacuation plans up to date. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)

Ensure that staff gain and refresh skills in safeguarding. This relates to staff receiving training in safeguarding disabled children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 43 paragraph 9.12)

Ensure that good employment practice is maintained and the performance management of staff includes ensuring staff are experienced in responding to fire drills to safeguard and minimise potential risks to children placed in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.1)

Ensure that information recorded about the young person is meaningful to staff and is recorded in a way that is helpful to the young person. This is with particular regard to the combined care plan/risk assessment. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62 paragraph 14.4)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

A registered charity owns the home. It provides short breaks for up to six young people at any one time. The young people who use the service have a learning disability or a social and communication disability within the autistic spectrum. The young people may also have associated physical disabilities.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 27/03/2015      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 23/01/2015      | Full            | Good                   |
| 12/02/2014      | Interim         | Good progress          |
| 11/09/2013      | Full            | Good                   |

## Inspection Judgements

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people with a learning disability benefit from positive and rewarding short breaks in the home. A mix of new and experienced staff support them to achieve this. The service works with a large number of families. Despite this, the staff know the young people well. A parent said: 'They really understand my daughter. From a parent's point of view you really want them to know the young people and they do, they really do.' The staff were able to talk about the young people as individuals. They were able to explain the ways in which young people communicate and express their feelings. A young person's guide to the service is available. The staff have written the guide in such a way as to make it more accessible to the young people.</p> <p>The staff and managers have got to know the families of the young people well. A family member said: 'I know the staff. We have meetings and reviews and there will be staff from the home at the meetings.' The staff have developed a 'meet the team' guide to support families. This contains photographs and pen pictures of staff. This helps families who may not meet staff regularly to have a concept of who is looking after their child. In addition, an 'all about us' leaflet has also been created for parents and carers to give an overview of the service. Families feel involved in the service. They report feeling welcome. One parent of a young person who has recently moved on said: 'What I liked about them is that they are proactive and are keen to involve us as parents.' This effective engagement with parents provides additional safeguards for the young people.</p> <p>Whilst in the home staff support the young people to engage in a wide range of activities that they otherwise may not experience. The staff and management team stress that they do not see the service as being simply about providing families with a break. A member of the management team stated: 'At the end of the day we are not here just to look after the young people and make sure they are fed and watered we are here to make sure they enjoy themselves, experience new things and make progress.'</p> <p>The young people make progress within the home. Although they may only attend the home for a few days spread across the year, the staff make a concerted effort to identify targets that young people can work towards. They monitor progress through regular reviews.</p> <p>The staff plan the transition of new young people into the service carefully. A considered, staged process takes place. This includes tea visits, home visits and</p> |                 |

observations of the young person in school. This increases the likelihood of placements being successful and limits the potential for placement breakdowns. This is particularly important given the young people's need for consistency and stability.

The staff work with young people and their families to identify targets to further develop independence skills. For example, increasing their ability to dress or clean themselves. The staff monitor and review these every six months. As a result, young people become more independent over time. When young people move on the home is proactive at supporting this. A parent said: 'The home was brilliant and gave us an extension. They supported tea visits. They took him to his new placement many times. They facilitated the new placement to come to them too. They did everything they could. I cannot fault their practice.'

Efforts are being made to make the building more homely. A handyman is painting the bedrooms. New sofas brighten up the lounge. There are a variety of resources available to young people within the home. Outside, young people are able to play in a well-kept garden. However, a staff team from a separate part of the wider organisation are increasingly using the office facilities within the home. This includes times when the young people are present. This compromises the homely feel.

The young people have care plans completed by the staff. These plans combine with risk assessments to form one overarching care and risk plan. This has resulted in a large and at times complicated document. The management team recognise the expectation that staff read and retain all of the information in these plans is unrealistic. Managers are giving further consideration as to how to make the format workable.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <p>The young people's combined care and risk plans give consideration to some elements of activity based risks. However, these do not sufficiently explore and analyse the risks associated with, for example, leisure activities. Specific activity risk assessments do not take place. This means that the systems within the home do not protect young people as far as reasonably possible from predictable risks. In a service that prides itself on the range of activities staff provide, this is a significant omission.</p> <p>The staff support young people to manage their behaviour whilst in the home. For some young people this means the occasional use of physical intervention. When</p> |                             |

physical intervention is used a member of the management team reviews the incident and debriefs take place with the staff involved. As a result, staff have the opportunity to reflect upon their involvement and consider ways in which practice can be improved. When physical interventions have taken place the service has not routinely spoken to the young person about the incident. For some young people this may not be possible due to their disabilities and stages of development, but the stated reason is often that the young person has gone home. There has been insufficient consideration as to how the home can overcome this obstacle. As a result, staff do not routinely capture the young people's views on these incidents. This means the young people are not afforded the additional safeguard this practice provides.

Fire drills take place. Despite this there is not a clear picture of who has participated in a drill. Some young people have not experienced a fire drill since coming to the home. Others have not had one for a number of years. There is no overview record showing which staff have been involved. Managers did not know if all staff had completed a drill. Some of the young people have moving and handling needs and others are likely to be distressed during any evacuation. This makes it imperative that the management team have assurance that staff are able to respond in an emergency. The staff complete personal evacuation plans for each young person. However, the staff do not always review these after drills have taken place. This means that some may lack relevant information.

The home has established effective links with social workers and the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO). When the home has needed to address concerns it has done so. One serious incident has occurred in the home since the last inspection. A LADO manager stated: 'They have come up with thorough investigations. They did not step away from this. I have no concerns about the quality of service or the safety of the young people.' The young person's social worker said: 'I am satisfied that the investigation was thorough.'

The staff are appropriately checked. When employment checks suggest the need for further information, this is gathered and assessed. The staff have a concept of the whistleblowing process. They are able to explain what they would do if they had concerns about a colleague's practice. There is evidence that staff share concerns about practice with managers in supervision and through on call systems. This provides reassurance that staff maintain an alertness to the possibility that anyone, including colleagues, can harm children.

No young people have gone missing from the home, nor are any young people currently at risk of child sexual exploitation. The local police community support officer spoke positively about the home, saying: 'Do I have any concerns? Oh God no! Not at all.'

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>A qualified, experienced and registered manager manages the home. She has been in post for eight years. A deputy manager and two senior members of staff support her. Whilst there have been considerable frontline staffing changes over the past year, which have placed pressure on the experienced staff, this situation has been resolved. The home is now almost fully staffed and the newer staff are reported to have grown in confidence and experience.</p> <p>The service is highly appreciated by the families who use it. They see this as invaluable support that enables them to continue to look after their children at home for the vast majority of the time. A social worker said: 'There has been a significant improvement for him over the past year. Things had been at breaking point. He is in a much better place now. This is because he is able to come here. If it was not for him coming to the home there is no way he would still be at home.' One parent said: 'Everything about it is amazing. You cannot put it in words. It is lovely. The staff are lovely. It is very relaxed. It is child friendly. They understand my daughter.' Families feel confident in leaving their children in the service.</p> <p>Parents and professionals report that young people enjoy attending. One parent said: 'I wish I could stay there sometimes. My daughter is elated when she sees that she is going.' A social worker of a young person who had recently returned said: 'We go on body language. He was happy to go back. There was nothing to indicate he was not enjoying it.' Observations of interactions between staff and young people suggest that they are relaxed in one another's company. The staff speak with warmth about their key children.</p> <p>The previous inspection identified an issue with the frequency of supervisions. The last six months have seen a consistent and sustained improvement in the frequency of supervisions. Staff report these to be of value. Supervision records show that staff are able to reflect on practice, are able to share concerns about practice with managers and receive challenge from managers when necessary.</p> <p>The management team are attempting to embed actions that were agreed following a serious incident review. This has not yet been effective. The managers have clearly informed staff of the changes to recording processes but not all staff consistently follow these instructions. The monitoring systems the managers use are not sufficiently robust to assist them in this process. This means that the management monitoring systems are not effective and do not contribute to improving the quality of care.</p> <p>A range of training courses are available. However, staff do not receive training in safeguarding disabled children. This is an omission given the needs of the young people. Research evidences the increased vulnerability of disabled children. This</p> |                 |

means staff do not benefit from the protected space to reflect on the factors that contribute to this increased vulnerability.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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