

SC060034

Registered provider: Break

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The 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: 13 and 14 February 2024

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: 4 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2023	Full	Good
20/07/2021	Full	Good
11/02/2020	Full	Good
12/12/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of this inspection, four children were staying overnight for their short break. In total, 18 children are using the short breaks service. One parent said, 'The staff are our lifeline, they keep us afloat. It sounds dramatic, but I mean it.'

Managers are meticulous in planning children's stays. They invest their time in understanding each child's interests, hobbies and sensory and health needs. This information is used to plan which children will spend time together during their stays. As a result, children receive exceptional support and have positive experiences.

Staff are dedicated and skilled in helping children to make progress, no matter how small. Staff thoroughly plan each child's experience before they arrive. This includes discussion about what level of help children need to reach a target. Children have made progress in caring for themselves, communicating their wishes and feelings, spending time with others and making choices. Staff help children to build confidence.

If children need additional support to overcome social anxiety or to experience a unique activity, virtual reality headsets are used. The headsets enable children to explore society in a safe and imaginative way. Staff tailor the experience as a child reacts. Stimuli can be added or removed to the experience. Because of this approach, two children now safely spend time in the community. The use of this equipment also helps children to attend pop concerts, learn how to go shopping, ride rollercoasters and have many other experiences in life that they may not otherwise have.

Staff are extremely resourceful in planning activities that they know children will enjoy. Children have had sensory train experiences, been to adventure parks, theme and water parks, beaches and museums. Meaningful activities are organised at the home, such as messy play, sensory circuits, cooking and arts and crafts. Children have access to a fully immersive sensory room, climbing wall, ropes, swings and exercise machines. Staff help children to build self-esteem while having fun.

Staff have substantial knowledge in supporting children who have complex health needs. Children experience high levels of care and attention. Staff work with families and external professionals to make certain that children's health is monitored closely. One parent said, '[Name of child] was really unwell overnight. I let him stay because I had confidence in the staff to keep him safe and make the right decisions. They are so competent.'

If children are not in education, staff go above and beyond expectations to help. Two children were not attending school because taxi staff did not feel confident to

care for them. One child had been excluded from school. Staff spent time with the taxi and school staff to help them to learn about the children. As a result, these children are all now accessing education and making good progress.

A wide range of communication aids are available for children to use. However, important information about where children sleep and who they will see during their stay is placed up high. This limits children's ability to understand this important information.

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

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities to report any safeguarding concerns. Since the last inspection, a system used to identify low-level concerns has been developed further, which has substantially reduced risks of harm to children. The successful implementation of this approach has been expanded to practice in the wider organisation.

Staff confidently use evidence-based research to help children interact positively with their physical and social environment. They understand that some children process information through their senses, which can be overwhelming. Staff use tailored approaches, such as exercise, deep pressure touch and sensory toys, to help children cope with certain situations. This means that behaviour incidents are managed effectively and there have been no physical interventions since the last inspection.

Staff understand the children's vulnerabilities. This is because plans and assessments are thoroughly detailed. Staff consistently review the plans and follow strategies that help to keep children safe. One child has learned to keep their seatbelt on in a car. One child now holds staff's hands, which means that they no longer require restrictive equipment. Staff are proactive and help children to feel calm and safe.

If consequences are used, they are protective or restorative in nature. This helps children to understand how their behaviour affects other people and keeps them safe. One child has learned to calm themselves when gaming by taking regular breaks when they become frustrated. Staff help children to make positive choices.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is qualified and experienced. He is innovative and inspirational. The deputy manager is equally committed and enthusiastic. Together, they have created a learning culture in the team. Staff are similarly self-motivated and child focused.

In addition to managers, a team of four senior staff influence the staff to deliver, with enthusiasm, the outcomes set out in the home's statement of purpose. This

additional level of middle managers means that a member of the management team is always available to provide support and guidance to staff.

Staff are driven to learn about disabled children. They look for research and share good practice with each other. They are skilled in using evidenced-based practice to improve children's lives. Because of staff's approaches, one child has started to recognise the feelings of their body when they are hungry, warm and cold and to recognise a range of emotions. Children receive outstanding and individualised care from this dedicated staff team.

The registered manager has employed a diverse staff team that enriches the children's lives and experiences. There is a balanced mix of experienced and new staff. Staff say that they feel supported by managers and speak about the children with pride.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. Staff move through a detailed induction, including regular reviews of practice. This helps the manager to guide staff and encourages them to reflect on their learning.

Managers make certain that staff receive regular supervision and appraisal. Supervisors are skilled at helping staff to explore their practice. Staff respond well to this approach and become aware of their own thoughts and beliefs. This helps staff to build relationships with children and promotes curiosity and creativity.

The manager understands the importance of staff being trained to meet children's needs. Specialist training is provided to ensure that staff have the skills required to understand complex health, behaviour and communication needs. Staff are either qualified or working towards the relevant childcare qualification within the required time frame.

The manager has good monitoring tools in place. He has excellent oversight of children's progress and areas in which they need more help. The manager understands the strengths and areas for development and has a clear development plan.

The manager has met the one requirement and 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 staff place important information about children's stays at a suitable height for children to see and understand. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)

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 address: Break, Schofield House, Spar Road, Norwich NR6 6BX

Responsible individual: Daniel Lummis

Registered manager: Peter Willson

Inspector

Mandy Start, Social Care Inspector

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