

SC064027

Registered provider: Delam Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people, aged from eight to 18 years old, who have complex learning disabilities.

The current manager successfully registered with Ofsted in June 2017.

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 January 2019

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: 20 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/12/2017	Full	Good
20/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make significant progress in all areas of their development. Their day-to-day experiences are immensely positive. This is because staff consistently deliver nurturing care. This focuses on identifying and meeting children's individual needs. Staff concentrate on children's abilities and do not define them by their disabilities.

Relationships between children and staff are extremely positive. Continual verbal praise and appropriate touch means that children learn to build very healthy relationships with adults.

Staff are excellent advocates for children. They use their extensive verbal and non-verbal communication skills to seek children's views and wishes. Using pictorial social stories, staff help children to understand the content of their care and support plans, and to celebrate their achievements. This helps and encourages children to continue to develop new skills.

Staff work exceptionally well with schools, allocated teaching staff and placing authorities to make sure that children's learning experiences are positive. They identify and address the physical and emotional barriers to education that children may face. Staff have extremely high aspirations for children and incorporate these into children's learning and support plans. These reflect children's individual communication needs and preferences, and their learning styles and interests. This integrated approach means that children benefit from excellent learning opportunities.

Children have very complex health needs. Staff prioritise these needs and work with specialist health professionals to meet these. There is a seamless collaboration between these professionals because managers and staff ensure that communication is clear and effective. Staff are inspirational in supporting children to understand their own health needs. They are sensitive to children's feelings regarding health matters and how these affect their physical and emotional well-being. This enables children to develop an acceptance of their health needs.

Children take part in a range of social, leisure and educational activities. Staff continually encourage children to try new things and to make the most of opportunities and facilities in the local community. This helps children to develop new hobbies and interests, grow in confidence and develop their social skills.

Staff understand how important the children's families are to the children. When appropriate, and taking account of children's wishes, staff work with families and placing authorities to facilitate regular family visits and social occasions. These help children to maintain these relationships and ensure that they are not isolated from their families.

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

Children are safe and protected from harm. Managers devise comprehensive and effective risk assessments. These emphasise children's abilities and positive behaviours and recognise that, for some children, their challenging behaviours are symptomatic of their disabilities.

Risk assessments guide staff effectively on how to best support children when their anxieties increase. Step-by-step strategies to reduce risks lead to consistent staff practice. As a result, staff quickly and effectively de-escalate any dangerous or risky behaviours that are detrimental to children's welfare.

Since the last inspection, no children have gone missing from the home. Nevertheless, managers and staff are acutely aware of children's significant vulnerability should they wander off from staff. To reduce these risks, the registered manager shares bespoke support plans with local police agencies. These provide police officers with key information on how to approach the children, basic engagement and distraction techniques, and advice on how their own behaviours and body language may increase children's anxieties. This pre-emptive approach to managing children's risk helps to protect them from harm.

Staff are extremely competent in identifying triggers and antecedents to children's challenging behaviours. They quickly deploy personalised diversion techniques to distract children and re-focus their attention. Consequently, the use of physical restraint continues to reduce. When appropriate, staff use incentives and rewards to help children to learn to manage their behaviours, taking account of their cognitive understanding and communication needs. This approach encourages children to consider how their actions impact on others.

Managers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of child protection thresholds and referral processes. Staff understand their own responsibilities for protecting children well. They are particularly alert to any changes in children's behaviours or reactions that may indicate abuse or harm. This is because some children do not communicate verbally. This excellent practice promotes children's safety.

Children live in a well maintained and welcoming home. Staff undertake health and safety checks and quickly address any concerns. The environment reflects children's individual needs and choices, and their tolerance to sensory stimulation. This creates a comfortable and relaxing home for children.

Staff recruitment is safe. The registered manager makes sure that she completes and verifies necessary checks to confirm the suitability of staff to work with children. This helps to protect children from possible harm or abuse.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary to manage the service effectively. She is highly enthusiastic and passionate in her resolve to provide exceptional care and support for children. Her vision for the home is aspirational. This focuses on children's individual needs, their progress and their happiness.

Staff receive regular and good-quality formal supervision. Managers use these meetings to help staff to reflect on and assess their practice and to consider their learning needs. Training programmes mirror children's individual, and often complex, health and welfare needs, and the overall aims and objectives of the service. This means that children receive care from staff who have the specific skills, knowledge and qualifications to meet their needs. The staff team recently won an award in recognition of the excellent care it provides.

The registered manager uses a range of internal audits to monitor children's progress. These help her to identify links between staff practice, partnership with other agencies, and children's progress. Consultation with children and their families further supports this process. The service continually evolves to meet children's changing needs because the registered manager can establish patterns and trends. She successfully evaluates these to identify areas for improvement.

Partnership working between the home and external agencies is exceptionally positive. This is a considerable strength of the service. It is the result of the tenacious determination of the registered manager to make sure that children can access the resources they need to enhance their lives and support their development. One professional said, 'The manager is the driving force behind the success of the home and this amazing service.' When necessary, the registered manager confidently challenges others if their actions fall short of acceptable standards. Consequently, children consistently make excellent progress.

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: SC064027

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Delam Care Limited

Registered provider address: Metropolitan House, 5th Floor, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Roberta Davies

Registered manager: Nichola Rhead

Inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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