

SC065730

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to 10 children with sensory impairment and/or learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

The registered manager is qualified and experienced.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2019	Full	Good
02/01/2019	Full	Good
25/09/2017	Full	Good
02/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their short breaks. They are cared for by an experienced staff team. Children's social and healthcare needs are well met. Children can make friends and try new and exciting activities. One child tried trampolining with their peers, and this was very successful. Children are able to make choices about their care. Their particular tastes and preferences are respected. For example, a child has been provided with a specific duvet cover to reduce their anxieties. This attention to detail in care planning means that children are more likely to enjoy their short break.

Families value this short-break service. Because staff are empathetic and understand the worries that parents may have about their child's care, parents develop trust in the staff team. Managers and staff provide good-quality information and support to children who are using the service for the first time. This begins with children and families visiting for dinner and then progresses to overnight stays. Children and families can move at their own pace, which reduces their anxieties. This gradual approach means that children settle well during their stays.

Staff have extensive knowledge and experience of a wide range of disabilities and healthcare needs. Healthcare procedures are clear and well understood by staff who receive good-quality training. However, managers have not ensured that their overview of medication administration identifies all recording errors.

Managers and staff work closely with the local authority social workers, schools and families. This means that targets and developmental goals are well understood and that children receive consistent approaches. For example, one child is learning to use their own spoon at mealtimes. Consistency across the child's home, school and short break means that the child is making progress in this area.

This is a purpose-built short-break service. It is separated into two distinct areas. This gives flexibility to accommodate children according to their particular needs and vulnerabilities. One area is spacious and has equipment to help the moving and handling of children. Another area has equipment to meet the sensory needs of children. Although the service is generally well presented, some areas require minor repair and updating.

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

Children's vulnerability is reduced because staff are well trained in the safeguarding of disabled children. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding systems and procedures. They know what to do if they are worried about a child's welfare.

Risks are also reduced because the building is safe and secure. When potential hazards are identified, these are quickly addressed. Good-quality risk assessments

are regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant. New and emerging risks are shared with families and managers so that children are protected.

Staffing ratios are high. This means that children are well supervised and the risk of children going missing is minimised. No children have gone missing. However, when children are new to this short-break service, missing from care protocols are not always completed and implemented quickly enough.

Children are regularly consulted about their short breaks and the activities they have taken part in. Good use is made of alternative communication methods to ensure that children can give feedback. This feedback is used in the planning of future activities.

Because some children have infrequent stays, it is common for their care needs to change between stays. Well-structured handover meetings are used effectively to ensure that staff have the most up-to-date information. This means that staff can provide safe and good-quality care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is qualified and experienced. She is well supported by two deputy managers. Together, they provide good leadership to a committed and experienced staff team.

There have been significant changes to the structure of this short-break service since the last inspection. Most healthcare support is now provided by the social care staff. This had resulted in some staff turnover and significant additional training requirements. However, this change is now fully embedded. Staffing arrangements are now stable, ensuring that children have consistency of care.

Staff have access to many training opportunities. This training includes bespoke training to meet the specific needs of individual children. Challenges due to COVID-19 have meant that training has generally been delivered online. However, this did not significantly reduce its quality. The service is now gradually returning to face-to-face training sessions.

Staff are also encouraged to learn informally. Managers set staff learning targets each month, such as to learn additional sign language words or to update their knowledge on a particular health condition. This opportunity for ongoing learning enables staff to continually develop their skills and knowledge.

Managers are fully involved in the decision-making regarding which children and families receive a short break. The managers are part of a multi-agency decision-making process. Once children begin their short break, managers put a great emphasis on the matching of children. They know the importance of having a group of children who engage well together. This means that children's short breaks are more likely to be a positive experience.

Managers ensure that the access to short breaks is flexible to meet the changing needs of families. When children's needs change, they can remain at this service and be cared for in a different specialist area. This means that families do not need to change their short-break provider.

Shortfalls identified in the last inspection have been addressed. As a result, an independent visitor now visits this short-break service on a regular basis and the monitoring of the quality of care is now more robust.

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.

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. ('Guide to children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

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: SC065730

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Registered provider address: Derby City Council, Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Andrew Kaiser

Registered manager: Samantha Watts

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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