

SC066651

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It is registered to provide short breaks for children and young people who have severe learning disabilities, some of whom may also have complex and challenging behaviours. The service can provide shared care to a small number of children and young people. In an emergency, the home can also provide short-term residential care to children's and young people's families that require crisis support.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 March 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	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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: 3 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

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. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular: review the use of the sensory room; personalise bedrooms and bathrooms; improve the access to Wi-Fi throughout the building; and have a sufficient number of working computers for the children and young people. Review and extend the play equipment in the garden.

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

Ensure that all the young people have a transition plan, funding and an identified adult placement within timescales to support their positive and timely transition to adult services.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people make enormous progress because of the individualised care that they receive. A parent said: 'I think my sons receive very good care. They have individual needs and the staff know and provide this.' The children and young people have achieved the goals set for them within their care and support plans. As goals are achieved, new ones are set to continue their journey of success. These goals include improving their communication skills, learning self-care, managing themselves in social settings and during activities and building self-confidence.

The staff implement support strategies to ensure that the children and young people engage in everyday life. The staff provide clear, positive structure and routines that support the children's and young people's needs extremely well. These assist in reducing the children's and young people's anxieties and enable them to be more actively involved in making decisions about their own daily life, for example in making choices about the social activities that they wish to take part in and deciding on the meals that they have. The children and young people learn and take part in their own daily living tasks and everyday self-care skills, including making snacks, bathing themselves, sitting at the

table to eat a meal and going out shopping in the community.

The children and young people flourish because they have very strong connections and extremely positive relationships with staff. A staff member said: 'We have a really experienced and diverse team of staff, who are caring and know our young people well.'

The staff team is dedicated to promoting the children's and young people's welfare and works with their best interests in mind. This provides them with a sense of security and belonging. The children and young people demonstrate this by readily seeking out the company of staff.

The children and young people benefit tremendously from the high level of support given to ensure that they can communicate their wishes through the use of various symbol-supported communication systems. The consistent use of these communication methods enables the children and young people to communicate their wishes and feelings and gives them an ability to make their own decisions and choices. This exceptional level of communication significantly promotes their independence.

All children and young people attend education. The staff work in partnership with schools and parents to best promote their learning. An educational professional said, 'There is very good communication between the staff at the home and school.'

The children and young people enjoy new social situations, experiences and leisure activities, including going on trips out to parks, the cinema, for walks, to the coast and shopping in the community.

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

The children and young people are kept safe as the staff have a clear understanding of their vulnerabilities and their specific individual risks.

The staff receive training in a variety of health, safety and safeguarding areas, including child protection, first aid and behaviour management. This provides the staff with the skills and a good knowledge to keep the children and young people safe.

The children and young people benefit greatly from the close supervision that is always provided by the staff, including when they go out in the community. There have been no incidents of children or young people going missing or being absent. Good staffing levels assist in keeping the children and young people safe from harm.

The staff demonstrate their full awareness of the identified risks to each child and young person in their care. These risks are recorded in detail within written risk assessments. When the children's and young people's circumstances and risks change, these documents are reviewed and routinely updated. The written risk assessments ensure that all the staff are aware of the strategies and actions that they must take to keep children and young people safe.

The staff explain that some children and young people are very vulnerable when out in the community. Other children and young people lack awareness of the risks to themselves. This may include not being able to demonstrate road safety skills or they may experience anxiety when participating in social activities and events. The staff carefully plan activities to ensure that they suitably support the children and young people, protecting them from harm.

The children and young people significantly benefit from the staff, who implement clear boundaries and routines within a caring environment. Detailed behaviour and daily routine plans, risk assessments and care plans provide all staff with the individual guide on how to care for each young person, specific to their individual and diverse needs. Implementation of these plans and strategies is successful. The children's and young people's behaviour improves greatly over time. They become less anxious and take a more positive and active part in daily activities.

For those children and young people who do go into crisis and are at risk of self-harm or becoming a danger to others, the staff provide excellent support. This is achieved through redirection, the use of distraction techniques or as a last resort the use of safe holds to protect them. Restraint is used rarely. The children and young people respond positively to these safe care approaches and the strong relationships that they have with the staff, who know and care for them well. This helps to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

Child protection and safeguarding matters are addressed without delay, working in partnership with other professionals, such as education, health and social care professionals. An education professional said, 'We work closely together on safeguarding matters. There is a lot of contact between us both to ensure all information is passed on.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since June 2009 and has extensive experience of working with children and young people. He holds the level 5 qualification in management. In recent months, the assistant manager has been the acting manager while the registered manager has been seconded to another role.

The acting manager has continued to maintain very good standards that disseminate to the whole staff team. This helps the staff to provide sustained and consistent nurturing care to all the children and young people. This ensures that the children and young people can achieve the very best outcomes.

The care of the children and young people is delivered in line with the home's statement of purpose. There are well-established admission procedures, which ensure that all the children and young people benefit from having introductory visits. This helps them to settle quickly into their short-break stays. This good support is also extended to the children's and young people's families.

The staff work cohesively with professionals and families, including social workers, education staff and new placement providers. This close partnership working helps to ensure that the children and young people receive a continued high level of care. However, more recently, there have been shortfalls and delays in the local authority agreeing the funding with other stakeholders for the young people making the transition to adult services. This creates a further delay in identifying new placements in a timely manner before this placement comes to an end. Though the staff work hard to address this matter, this falls short of good care planning for the young people and their families who require an adult service.

Great teamwork is the result of working in a very supportive environment. This assists the staff to work together to carry out their care work with the children and young people. This is achieved by the thorough implementation of good communication, including detailed daily handovers from one shift to another, communication books, regular supervision and staff meetings. Most of the staff team members hold the level 3 diploma in caring for children and young people. All mandatory training is provided as the manager recognises the importance of this training and invests in the staff. In addition, staff benefit from accessing specialist training, including symbol-based communication systems, autism, signs of safety, sleep hygiene and 'Prevent' training. This supports the staff to be well equipped to meet the needs of the children and young people.

Action has been taken to implement the recommendations made at the last inspection. The statement of purpose has been reviewed and sent to Ofsted. The manager's Regulation 45 monitoring report has been promptly sent to Ofsted. The staff are routinely receiving formal supervision. The manager has reviewed and improved the oversight of the children's and young people's records.

The environment is suitably maintained, with some communal areas being kept to a high standard. However, there are some shortfalls. The bathrooms and bedrooms need personalisation and lack a homely feel. The sensory room appears bare and worn. The children and young people express frustration with not being able to readily access the internet in all areas of the home. There is a lack of computers, which is a popular activity of the children and young people. The garden area has some play equipment but this is limited.

Good standards are maintained through a wide range of auditing and monitoring systems, which are undertaken by the management team and by the provider. The manager demonstrates a strong awareness of the strengths of the home and recognises the areas to be improved upon. There is a speedy response to address the deficits identified through the monitoring systems. This supports continued improvement to the care and service provided to the children and young people.

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: SC066651

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

Responsible individual: Carly Speechley

Registered manager: Garry Levesley

Inspector

Debbie Foster: social care inspector

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