

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC066651
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Sheffield City Council
Registered provider address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH
Responsible individual	Post vacant
Registered manager	Garry Levesley
Inspector	Ian Young

Inspection date	08/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. All of the highly positive aspects noted at the last inspection remain firmly in place and the home continues to provide children and young people with short-term breaks of a very high standard. The high regard in which all staff hold the vulnerable group of children and young people using this service is a key element of its success. While some young people can present with challenging behaviour and all have profound needs, staff at all times speak of each young person with a deep and sincere warmth. The home's high levels of performance and quality stem from this very positive feature. Children and young people visiting for short breaks evidently enjoy the extensive range of activities available to them. The home continues to offer a wide variety of things to do, either using the home's excellent in-house facilities or on well-planned trips out. Staff are further developing the facilities available with the introduction of a box of sensory items incorporating different feels and textures, so that children and young people can learn and explore in a safe environment. Strong partnership arrangements with parents and local schools are still in evidence. The links between the home and specialist health and social work services remains strong. For example, recent collaborative working was undertaken to safeguard vulnerable children and young people considered to be at risk from a known violent offender. Risk assessment and management in the context of children and young people additional needs continue to be a particularly strong feature of the home's practice. Staff have recently introduced new young people to the home as others have now transitioned to adult services, a process that has been meticulously planned. Introductions have been handled sympathetically and in the timescale of children and young people. Because the home's experienced and knowledgeable staff are perceptive and sensitive to young people's individual needs, some young people have been introduced to the service quickly, while others are taking longer at their own pace.	

The home's highly competent managers and staff provide a consistent and stable presence in children and young people's lives. The established and well-trained nature of the workforce means that children and young people's special needs are met well by staff in a calm and attentive manner. This means that there have been no notifiable incidents since the time of the last inspection, and close supervision means that children and young people do not go missing.

There are no child protection concerns, including risk of sexual exploitation, and no child or young person has required restraint. Given the profound needs of young people who receive a short-term break at this home, this is an admirable achievement.

Regular visits to the home by an independent visitor take place. The home's approach to any issues raised by the visitor's reports remains swift and responsive. For example, managers have reintroduced regular checks of fire safety equipment. This task is now routinely performed by the home's handyman, whose appointment has also resulted in the redecoration of children and young people's bedrooms to a high standard, and the outside play area is now cleaned up ready for lighter evenings and warmer weather.

Recent improvement in menu planning means that food is now available that meets the individualised needs and preferences of specific children and young people at every meal time. Meals are planned each night around the particular requirements of the residents' group. This ensures that personalised dietary needs are routinely catered for.

The home's comprehensive development plan appropriately prioritises further improvements in engagement with young people and their parents. Managers and staff have taken a critical look at their current method of obtaining feedback from parents through postal questionnaires, which is limited, and they are currently exploring more effective means such as the use of mobile phone apps.

Consultation with young people is now undertaken as part of regular individual sessions. Given that many of the children and young people are non-verbal due to their special needs, this means that consultation can now be tailored to their particular methods of communication.

The weekly children and young people's meeting has taken on a themes-based approach, and this allows young people to play and learn together. For example, a recent topic on the Chinese New Year resulted in an appealing wall display in the home's atrium. Attractive learning resources have been purchased to support this approach, and these promote learning appropriate to young people's level of understanding.

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 complex needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection.'

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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