

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC066651
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Sheffield City Council
Registered person address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH

Responsible individual	Dorne Collinson
Registered manager	Garry Levesley
Inspector	Ian Young

Inspection date	15/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC066651

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Members of staff are experts in providing practical care to young people with special needs requiring a short-term break.
- Young people are provided with individually tailored packages of care.
- Partnership working with parents and schools is excellent.
- It is well resourced and well kept.
- Staff are continually improving young people's experience, such as finding the right format for young people's meetings so that they are fully involved.
- Considerable care goes into planning young people's short-term breaks so that they can take place safely and securely.
- In the very small number of instances where child protection processes are required, the home is fully compliant with procedure and cooperative with investigating social workers.
- Managers are very experienced and talented, and support the staff group well.
- Staff, including a small number of newly appointed staff, are well supported through regular supervision and access to training.
- Records are well kept to ensure a thorough understanding of young people's current circumstances, including the innovative and recently introduced 'progress' file.
- The independent person appropriately challenges management on the home's effectiveness, and managers respond openly to the challenge.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It is registered to provide short-term breaks to children and young people with complex needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/11/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The home provides a very high standard of care to young people with special needs who are assessed as needing a short-term break as part of their care package. Fundamental to this very high level of operation is the knowledge, wisdom and expertise of the home's staff group. Staff are proactive in providing practical solutions to the challenges presented by what can be an extremely demanding group of young people. This is achieved in a calm, measured and highly skilled way that is tailored to young people's personalised needs. To facilitate this, very thorough handover and planning sessions take place between members of staff. This ensures that young people are being cared for safely, as appropriate to their individual needs. Partnership working between parents and staff is excellent. Parents report that they receive a 'first-rate' service, with exemplary levels of communication before, during or after a short-term break. One parent spoken to said that, although their children had only recently begun using the service, they were 'already fully at ease' about staff's capacity to handle the challenges involved. Staff also work in close cooperation with schools. All young people using the service are the subject of statements of special educational needs. Staff therefore work closely with specific schools to ensure that they have any relevant information from the young person's short-term break, and that they are reinforcing the young person's education and healthcare plans. Attainment from young people's starting points is incremental and can be painstaking, but several examples from young people's care files were evident and showed significant progress, which the home has contributed to substantially. The home provides a warm and welcoming physical environment, which is very well kept. Its purpose-built facilities provide young people with a range of opportunities to enjoy activities during their short-term break, and sufficient staffing levels mean that they can undertake bespoke activities under appropriate levels of supervision, and have fun. Following the recommendation of a previous inspection report, the home now holds young people's meetings regularly and these are used constructively (for example, to plan a Hallowe'en party that the young people would enjoy). Further work is taking place on sourcing and purchasing materials to enable the young people to communicate at the meetings in a meaningful way, appropriate to their abilities.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The home has in place a range of measures to ensure that young people's short-term breaks take place safely and securely. Care provided by the experienced staff group is based on consistent boundary setting, and staff are frequently called upon to assist parents in this aspect of young people's care. Given the very challenging behaviour presented by some young people, it is commendable that staff rarely use physical intervention as a means of controlling young people's behaviour. In the five instances since the last full inspection of the home, most have been at a low level, such as hand-holding until the young person calms down. In the very small number of examples where a higher level of restraint was used, this was delivered appropriately by well-trained staff to ensure the safety of both the young person and the public. Instances of physical intervention are recorded and signed off appropriately, and are debriefed to allow staff the opportunity to learn from the incident and avoid repetition. Good risk-management is central to the home's successful approach to safe care. Risk to all young people is routinely and thoroughly assessed, and assessments are frequently updated. Care is provided where necessary on a one-to-one basis to make sure that a young person can enjoy the evening's activities safely and without harm. Waking night staff are fully appraised of young people's needs, and provide seamless care throughout the young person's stay. A careful matching process ensures that young people of varying behaviours are not mixed in a way that would detract from the value of their short-term break (for example, young people who are highly active being cared for on a night when others present are distracted by noise and movement). In the very small number of cases where child-protection processes are required, the home is fully compliant with procedures and proactive in following them. Young people using the short-term breaks service are in the care of their parents, so do not always benefit from allocation to a social worker. However, social workers are involved where necessary by the home. For example, an unsubstantiated allegation made against a temporary member of staff resulted in an appropriate referral to the local authority's designated officer. A child-protection concern emerging during the inspection allowed inspectors to observe the home liaising closely with the investigating social worker, offering appropriate advice on the young person's level of understanding and patterns of behaviour. The home is suitably proactive in managing the very small number of complaints received from parents. Staff are generally receptive to any issues raised, which are	

appropriately recorded and used as learning opportunities to further improve the service to young people. Recorded complaints are significantly outnumbered by compliments from parents on the home's excellent management of their child's short-term break.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. The senior management team is equally skilled and well established. This means that, together, they provide exemplary leadership to the experienced staff group. Recent absence in the management team due to illness has resulted in one of the team leaders acting up as the home's deputy manager on a day-to-day basis. This situation has occurred previously, and the individual member of staff is talented, capable and highly competent in this role. A small number of staff are newly appointed and currently undergoing a thorough induction process. The learning of a new member of staff spoken to by inspectors was being reinforced well through observation and mentoring, in addition to the regular management supervision and training available to all staff. She said that, 'Mentoring has been very helpful, everything has been explained to me and I feel totally supported in my new role in caring for young people with special needs.' Staff are also supported by the home's recently updated statement of purpose. A new handyman has been appointed, who will begin a programme of maintenance of the outdoor play equipment and repair damage to bedrooms caused by some young people's compulsive behaviour as a result of their special needs. Up-to-date and comprehensive record-keeping across the full range of written records means that staff are fully appraised of young people's current circumstances and any issues likely to affect their short-term break. One recent innovation is the 'progress' file, where all documents, such as '10-step' plans of achievement, records of direct work sessions and periodic reviews, are kept together in one place. Introducing the file characterises the commitment of the home to continuous improvement of the service it offers. It would further benefit from a front sheet detailing the goals the home is hoping to achieve, so that these can be ticked off as the young person reaches milestones on the way to defined outcomes. The home is well supported by independent visiting, including a thorough process carried out under Regulation 44 of the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. Detailed reports by the independent person	

demonstrate appropriate challenge to the home's management on the effective running of the home, such as recording of young people's meetings and fire regulations, to which managers respond openly and positively.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people, and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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