

SC372511

Registered provider: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority own and run the children's home. The home provides a short-break service for young people with learning and/or physical disabilities and complex health needs.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The registered manager and staff ensure that the individual and complex needs of children and young people are met to an exceptional standard.
- Children's and young people's experiences and opportunities are enhanced as they are encouraged and supported to engage in meaningful and purposeful social activities in and around the local community.
- Staff respect children's and young people's dignity and provide a high level of individual care and support, as identified within their individual person-centred plans.
- The manager is passionate about improving the experiences and progress for children and young people and he supports his team extremely well to ensure that this happens.
- The manager and staff are committed to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people and they do this exceptionally well.
- The manager and staff have forged and sustained effective working relationships with a wide range of services to ensure that children and young people receive the care and support that they need quickly.
- Effective internal and external monitoring systems ensure that the manager and the leadership team have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for continued development.
- Children, young people, their parents and professionals are extremely complimentary about the care and support that the manager and staff provide.

The children's home's areas for development:

- All staff should be provided with training to ensure that they can implement a physical intervention should this be required.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations:

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all their staff have been adequately trained in the principles of restraint and any restraint techniques appropriate to the needs of the children the home is set up to care for as defined in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.57)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children, young people and their families continue to benefit from outstanding care and support during their short-break stay. Children and young people receive exceptional, individualised care and support, which ensures that they make great strides forward in achieving their individual goals and targets.

Excellent communication with family members ensures that personal routines and preferences are recognised, valued and supported. This ensures that children and young people have a positive and enjoyable short break from home. This was confirmed by a number of children and young people. One young person said, 'I just love coming here. I love it, I love it, I just love it,' another wrote, '[the name of the home] is awesome.' Family members reiterated this and said, 'We received fantastic help and support from the manager and staff when [name] had a meltdown and I had no one else to help me. The staff came out of their way to help me and [name], which I am very grateful of.' Another parent went on to say, 'The staff are fantastic and provide excellent support for my child with his behaviour and sensory needs. The staff are always loving and kind towards [name] and are genuinely happy to see him when I bring him, which means a lot to me as his Mum.'

The registered manager and staff are committed to ensuring that children's and young people's views are understood and taken into account. Central to good care planning is the way that the staff use a range of communication methods to enable children and young people to communicate their wishes and feelings and how this has an impact on their daily lives. Staff are also now able to use Makaton to communicate, which has further improved communication. Furthermore, staff are highly skilled and have an intrinsic knowledge and understanding of each child and young person so that they can interpret their facial expressions and body language. This ensures that meaningful participation is achieved within this home.

The staff engage and interact with children and young people extremely well. The staff know children's and young people's complex and individual needs well. Staff speak with

passion and warmth when they share the experiences and progress that children and young people make. The staff are proud to share children's and young people's achievements and staff consistently praise and support them to achieve their next steps. This ensures that children and young people continue to make significant improvements in relation to their health, education and emotional, social and psychological well-being.

The registered manager and staff are creative in ensuring that children and young people can experience the opportunities that they have identified for their stays in this home. For example, one young person identified that they wanted to swim with dolphins in Disneyland. The staff's 'can do' attitude ensured that the young person benefited from an exciting trip to Blackpool to experience the rides and then a trip to the Sea Life Centre to replicate this experience.

Transition planning for children and young people accessing a short-break service is outstanding. The registered manager carefully considers the needs of each child or young person and ensures that the compatibility of the group is also considered. The registered manager and staff work alongside and communicate well with children and young people, and carefully prepare them for any significant changes to their lives. Staff have developed positive working relationships with schools, health colleagues and a range of adult services to aid them in their work. This cohesive approach promotes continuity of care for children and young people, while preparing them well for any significant transitions within their lives. This ensures that children and young people join and leave the home successfully.

Children and young people enjoy a range of interesting and exciting experiences during their short break at the home. Staff carefully and enthusiastically plan for their stay, in consultation with them and their families. This ensures that children, young people and family members are involved with care planning as far as practicable. Children and young people benefit from a range of activities, such as taking part in the sensory scheme, attending swimming lessons and enjoying visits out to local parks and attractions. These activities, alongside other activities such as movie nights and gardening clubs, enable children and young people to develop positive relationships with each other and their local community, and to expand on their previous experiences. This in turn enables and supports children and young people to build happy, positive childhood memories of their time spent at the home.

Careful consideration is given by the staff to ensure that the health needs of children and young people are effectively addressed. Improvements in the systems for booking medication into and out of the home minimise the potential for medication errors. Improved records and verbal handovers with parents prior to the short-break stay ensure that staff are up to date with children's and young people's changing health needs, such as medication regimes. Furthermore, the registered manager ensures that healthcare practice is current, up to date and research-based as he links into The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. This and the close working relationships that the registered manager and staff maintain with families and specialist health professionals ensure that children's and young people's routine and complex medical health needs are extremely well met.

Improved working relationships between the registered manager and education staff ensure that children and young people receive a consistent and holistic approach when having their care and educational needs met. Regular meetings with education professionals and the registered manager now take place to ensure that children's and young people's new and emerging needs are known and understood well. This cohesive approach ensures that children and young people receive a high standard of consistent care. This supportive and unified approach enables children and young people to make good progress in line with their individual educational goals and targets.

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

Parents confirm that their children are kept safe and feel safer because of the actions taken by staff. The registered manager and staff are aware of the particular vulnerabilities of children and young people who have disabilities. Staff are clear about their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They have a thorough understanding of the whistleblowing policy and procedure, which is regularly reiterated during team meetings. These discussions, alongside regular safeguarding training and updates, keep staff abreast of any significant changes in safeguarding practice, and thereby promote children's and young people's welfare and safety.

Staff provide a high level of care and supervision to all children and young people. The staff are highly committed and have an understanding of each child's and young person's specific needs, behaviours and mannerisms. Children's and young people's care planning is meticulous and highly personalised. The registered manager understands risks and vulnerabilities and continuously assesses these and records all information in the risk management plans. Staff fully understand and follow these. Information within these plans is discussed at daily handovers, supervisions and team meetings. This ensures that the staff team is fully equipped and supported to promote children's and young people's needs safely.

The registered manager and staff are aware of the potential dangers associated with the online world. They work well with children and young people to share this information and knowledge. Staff use research-based practice to inform their understanding and knowledge base so that this information and guidance remains current and up to date. Consequently, children and young people receive appropriate support to stay safe online.

Children and young people are kept safe when they visit this home because the registered manager ensures that routine health and safety checks of the premises are carried out. These, alongside the annual gas, electrical and fire safety checks, and the annual reviews of the specialist equipment within the home and of the motor vehicles, help to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and staff.

The registered manager is committed to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people. He ensures that new staff are carefully selected and vetted, and that they receive adequate training, support and supervision. This and a suitable and sufficient induction to the home ensures that children's and young people's needs are consistently

met to an exceptional standard by staff.

Positive behaviour is consistently and effectively promoted and therefore sanctions are not usually needed in this home. The staff's innate understanding of children's and young people's individual behaviours and potential triggers supports this. Staff sensitively intervene when required and support children and young people well at times of crisis. Although monitoring by the registered manager has identified that staff require further physical intervention refresher training, this has yet to be provided by the organisation. Consequently, one member of staff was out of date with this training when they were involved in the one physical intervention that has been used during this inspection period.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager leads the home. He registered with Ofsted in June 2015. A deputy manager and two principal residential childcare workers support the manager. The leadership team and staff are all committed to delivering high-quality care tailored to meet the individual and complex needs of all children and young people. The effectiveness of this highly specialised care, support and dedication is evident in the improved experiences and opportunities that children and young people benefit from.

A real strength of this home is the child-centred approach that the manager and staff expect and deliver. The children and young people are the heart of the home, and the manager and staff do their utmost to ensure that they receive care and support as set out in the home's recently updated statement of purpose.

A sufficient number of permanent staff who are dedicated, experienced and qualified deliver excellent care. All but one member of staff have the required childcare qualification. Suitable plans are in place to ensure that the new member of casual staff achieves this within the required time frame. Staff are passionate about improving the experiences of children and young people in their care, and they deliver an exceptional standard of personalised care to children and young people. As such, children, young people and their families benefit greatly from the services and support that they receive from this home.

The registered manager is diligent and thorough in his monitoring of the home and has a sound understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. He has identified these areas within his internal monitoring systems. This, alongside the additional rigour and challenge that the independent visitor offers during their monthly visits, enables the registered manager to continually improve his service.

Sound processes and good management oversight ensure that significant incidents are addressed promptly and sufficiently. The registered manager is quick to identify areas of improvement within his monitoring and evaluation of these events and he implements any learning from this quickly. Any issues or shortfalls identified with staff practice are addressed appropriately with the staff team. This promotes the safety and well-being of

children and young people who access this service.

Fantastic working relationships with parents and partner agencies ensure that children and young people receive the support and services that they need to meet their individual and specific complex needs. Improved working relationships with independent reviewing officers, specialist nursing teams, school, social workers and parents ensure that all children and young people experience a high level of consistent care and support in maintaining their structured routines. Consequently, children and young people continue to make measurable progress in achieving their clear and specific individual targets and goals. One family member wrote, 'I am very happy with the care that my child receives. The staff are fantastic and provide excellent support for [name of young person] with his behaviour and sensory needs.' Another parent wrote, 'My child is being assisted and supported in several ways to develop and maintain their independence skills. He can now help himself to drinks and yoghurts.'

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: SC372511

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Registered provider address: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Town Hall,
King William Street, Blackburn BB1 7DY

Responsible individual: Alyson Hanson

Registered manager: Jeremy Wood

Inspector

Janine Shortman-Thomas: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017