

SC372511

Registered provider: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides a short-breaks service for up to five young people. The service provides specialist care for young people with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and other complex healthcare needs. It is operated by an experienced and qualified registered manager who is supported by an exceptionally well-trained and experienced staff team. As part of this full inspection, parents and professionals were interviewed, and young people were observed interacting with staff and taking part in activities.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 February 2020

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	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 30 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/01/2019	Full	Outstanding
03/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people's lives are consistently enriched during their short-break stay.

Residential care planning is exceptional. Each individual plan is developed in partnership with young people, their parents and external professionals. The meticulous attention to detail means that plans truly capture young people's unique selves. Because of this, young people thrive and make incredible progress in all aspects of their lives.

Exceptional care is taken to ensure that young people are matched to groups of children with similar needs, abilities and interests. This means that each short-break stay is specifically planned to meet the needs of all young people in the group. As a result, young people are consistently provided with unique and exciting opportunities and experiences that match their individual care needs. A parent said, 'I couldn't believe my child went zip wiring. I could never have imagined they could achieve so much. I am thrilled.'

Relationships between young people and the staff are captivating. The staff completely understand young people's unique personalities and welcome them to the service with open arms, smiles and cuddles. This genuine warmth and affection shared between the young people and staff reflect the happy and exceptionally supportive environment created for young people.

Young people's health is effectively managed. The outstanding systems and procedures in place ensure that young people's health is rigorously assessed and meticulously managed. Likewise, staff are extremely alert to any change in behaviours which may indicate that a child is becoming unwell. Swift and effective action is taken in partnership with parents and healthcare professionals to address any concerns.

Consultation with young people and their families is at the forefront of the care planning process in this home. Staff are skilled in the use of British sign language and picture exchange communication. These communication systems provide young people with the essential tools to help them make their needs known. Likewise, young people are expertly supported through regular young people's meetings to share their views and opinions about the care they receive. Young people understand that their views are important. This is because they receive regular feedback from the 'You asked, we listened forum'. This provides all young people with the outcome and action taken in respect of their suggestions and comments.

Parents are welcome to visit the service at any time. The registered manager and staff have immense empathy for parents whose child may be using the service for the first time and understand their anxiety about separating from their child. Therefore, staff ensure that parents are offered opportunities to observe their child

in the setting. This caring approach helps to alleviate parents' fears and anxieties. A parent said, 'In the beginning, I was so worried that my child wouldn't settle. It helped that I could call to the home and see them playing and being happy. The staff always give me thorough feedback even if there has been a small issue. This place is amazing.' Another parent said, 'I don't know what I would do without this service. It is like my second home. The staff are like my family. My child is always so excited to visit.'

The service works collaboratively with the education providers for all the young people accessing the service. This means that the staff continue to work on the targets and projects young people are undertaking in school, for example, developing independence skills such as cooking and baking, getting washed and dressed and helping around the home. A deputy headteacher said, 'The registered manager and staff make a tremendous difference to the lives of young people. They thrive in this service and develop confidence in all areas of their lives.'

Access for all is championed by the home. The registered manager and staff make sure that a young person's disability does not impede them from opportunities or experiences. Young people enjoy exciting and exhilarating activities, from sliding down the biggest water slide to zip wiring and climbing. The registered manager and staff listen to the young people's aspirations and help to make them happen. This exemplary dedication means that young people begin to realise their own potential as their ambitions grow and grow.

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

Young people's safety is consistently prioritised. Individual risk assessments are developed in partnership with parents and external professionals. These assessments provide the staff with clear guidance in the management of any assessed risks. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed and updated to ensure that young people remain safe in the home.

Staff are exceptionally well trained in managing risk factors associated with the young people's complex healthcare needs. They work collaboratively with healthcare professionals to ensure that any changes in a young person's health needs are meticulously documented and shared with the staff team. This means that young people can continue to enjoy their short-break stay even if their healthcare needs change. Parents are assured by the level of expertise in the staff team and said, for example, 'My child is completely safe. I know the staff will always contact me if there is a concern. They are fantastic.'

Behaviour management strategies are person centred and focus on praise and reward. Young people's individual achievements are celebrated in the home no matter how small they may be. Observations of young people engaging with staff show the level of recognition young people receive, which includes comments like, 'fantastic communication', 'excellent choice', 'fabulous try' and 'amazing listening'. Young people respond with delight and are clearly proud of themselves.

Staff are equally skilled in the management of challenging behaviours. Excellent redirection and de-escalation techniques enable young people to become calm in this highly supportive and consistent environment. This means that the use of restraint is extremely rare. Since the last full inspection in January 2019, there has been one occasion requiring a simple guide.

Young people enjoy their short-break stay in very safe surroundings. This means that they can enjoy the beautiful and secure outside space and the range of outdoor play equipment in complete safety. Although young people do not go missing from the home, individual risk assessments and missing from home procedures are in place to capture this eventuality. Young people are helped and prepared to understand risks associated with becoming missing, including stranger danger and child sexual exploitation. In addition, staff and young people regularly complete projects that include online safety, bullying and road safety. This clearly demonstrates the commitment by staff to ensuring that young people always remain safe.

Young people's safety is a key aspect in the design of this purpose-built specialist service. Blinds used for window coverage are integrated between the glass panels. This makes sure that young people do not become entangled in pull-cords. Likewise, the new electronic intelligence system alerts the waking night staff when a young person gets out of bed or their bedroom door is open. The external grounds provide a range of safe play and exploration areas. The grounds are securely fenced, and there is an electronic gate system. This ensures that all visitors to the home are checked prior to being given access to the grounds.

Young people are supported and encouraged to make decisions and choices. They are provided with the assessed freedom to make mistakes and take calculated risks. Consequently, there are occasions when young people do not make the right decision or choice. This is a significantly important learning curve for young people. As a result, and because of the scaffold of support and guidance underpinning this service, young people learn from first-hand experiences and recognise risks more easily.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has been in post since June 2015. He has a wealth of experience in both the nursing profession and in children's residential care. He is qualified at national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 5. The registered manager is supported by a highly trained and experienced staff team. The staff team holds qualifications ranging from NVQ level 5 in social care management to NVQ level 3 in children's residential care.

The staff receive an exceptional level of guidance and support through consistent and targeted supervision. A staff member said, 'The registered manager is fantastic. He is all about the young people and making a difference in their lives. I love working here. It isn't a job to me.'

Young people are supported by an exceptionally well-trained staff team. They undertake a range of specialist training courses, including training in epilepsy, specialist feeding techniques and autistic spectrum disorder. In addition, staff undertake training in parental crisis. This helps staff understand how parents feel when they are in crisis and the impact this has on the child. A parent said, 'If ever I am struggling, I know there is always someone on the end of a phone no matter what time it is. The registered manager and staff always have time for me, and this has helped me with my child a great deal.'

The registered manager is meticulous in his approach to the assessment and analysis of the care provided to young people during their short-break stay. He collaborates with young people, parents and professionals to ensure that their views are considered and to identify any areas where the service can be improved. The registered manager demonstrates a sincere commitment to enhancing the lives of all the young people using this short-break service.

Regular visits by the independent visitor provide the registered manager with a comprehensive assessment of the service provision. Any actions and/or recommendations made by the visitor are acted on immediately and referenced in the registered manager's response. The independent visitor said, 'This is a fantastic home. They do some fabulous work with the young people. The manager and staff are so open to suggestions because they are always looking to improve the service.'

The registered manager and staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to delivering outstanding child-centred practice that is tailored to the individual and personal needs of young people. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the array of excellent opportunities and experiences young people have during their stay. This has promoted young people's self-esteem and self-confidence and helped them to develop a greater sense of ambition for their future.

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: SC372511

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Mannion

Registered manager: Jeremy Wood

Inspector

Maria McGranaghan, Social Care Inspector

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