

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-break care for up to five children. The service provides care for children who may have learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and other complex healthcare needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2015.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

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: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Outstanding
30/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
26/02/2020	Full	Outstanding
30/01/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children flourish as a result of the excellent care they receive from a dedicated and skilled staff team. Staff are ambitious for children. Children with complex physical health needs and significant additional learning needs are given opportunities to have fun, explore new interests and make small steps towards being more independent.

Well-planned child and family-centred introductions to the home help children to feel secure. Staff visit children in school and speak with their teachers to get to know them and to build a detailed knowledge of their needs. This knowledge informs the individualised care each child experiences.

One parent said, 'The home is a breath of fresh air. Our daughter goes in and out with a smile on her face. She gets off her iPad as they have so much for her to do there. It's a happy place for our daughter.'

Great consideration is given to matching the needs and interest of children on each short break. As a result, children's stays are harmonious and meet their collective needs and interests.

The home and garden provide children with an inclusive safe space to relax and play. The needs of children with physical disabilities and those with additional sensory needs are met through the accessibility of the building and garden. The range of equipment supports children's physical care and developmental needs.

After each short break, parents receive detailed written information about their child's stay. Parents can also use this record to share relevant information with staff. This helps parents to understand their child's experiences and ensures that staff are informed of any changes to children's needs.

Children, including those who are non-verbal, have plenty of opportunities to make decisions about their day-to-day care. Children are provided with choices in relation to meals or activities. Staff use children's preferred methods of communication, such as Makaton or picture and symbol exchanges, to gain their wishes and feelings.

Recently, a small group of children took part in a 'take over' day at the home. They spent time in the office answering the phone, helping staff with health and safety checks and learning about the responsibilities of the staff team. In addition to their short stays, older children are able to participate in an independent group and are supported to develop additional skills in preparation for adulthood.

These additional opportunities for children help them to build confidence and feel valued.

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

Children with complex physical health needs, including children who need enteral (tube) feeding and those with degenerative conditions, are cared for by staff who have regular training and support from specialist health care professionals. Children receive a high quality of personal care which keeps them safe.

The registered manager is proactive in seeking the relevant training and information for staff as children's health needs change or new information comes to light. Recently, one child's care plan was amended due to an increased likelihood of bed sores. Staff received additional specialist training and support to meet his needs. The recording of his routine during the night was improved to ensure that it better reflected the care given from night staff and provided increased transparency and accountability. This timely response means the child can continue to access his short break stays as his needs change.

Children receive a minimum of one- to- one support and staffing ratios are increased in line with children's needs. This helps children to stay safe and also ensures that they are able to take part in activities and enjoy their stay.

Highly skilled staff use their expertise and knowledge of children to provide a child-centred response to children's distress. The physical restraint of children is extremely rare. Staff are able to diffuse children's anxieties and help them to have a safe and positive experience in the home.

Staff manage the complex task of storage, administration and recording of medication exceptionally well. There are excellent well-established practices in place between parents and staff for the handover of medication. Staff are diligent in their duty of care, and written health plans provide staff with clear and comprehensive information about children's health needs.

The registered manager provides a timely and appropriate response to safeguarding incidents. He shares information with families, social workers and key professionals to address safeguarding concerns. Information about serious incidents is shared with Ofsted as required by regulation. This practice helps to reduce risks and increase children's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The excellent quality of care provided to children is driven by the knowledge, skills and passion of the registered manager. The manager has been in post for nine years. He continues to demonstrate an undiminished commitment to children with complex and additional needs.

The skilled staff team, many of whom have worked at the home for a number of years, are supported by regular high-quality supervision of their practice. A

comprehensive training programme ensures their continued development. Staff provide a flexible and child-focused approach to their work. They move working hours to meet the needs of children and ensure that children are cared for by a consistent and familiar team of staff.

Team meetings are used effectively to share information and build staff skills and knowledge. External professionals attend team meetings to provide additional input. Recently a member of staff from the adult transition team attended the meeting to discuss her new role and to develop relationships with the staff team to support children's positive moves on to adult provision.

The registered manager goes above and beyond to improve experiences and outcomes for children. He is part of a wider system that supports disabled children in the borough. He meets weekly with leaders from the local school, attended by most of the children accessing short breaks, to share information and has created opportunities for children to access the home's extensive garden and play equipment during school hours to give them additional opportunities for play.

Leaders and managers have an exemplary understanding of the service. Regular auditing of written work, formal observations of staff practice with children, and feedback from families and professionals are used to continually review and develop the service.

The registered manager's quality of care reports are completed quarterly and take in to consideration the information gained through these established systems of oversight. These are not being sent to Ofsted in a timely way as required by regulation. This limits oversight by the regulator but has not impacted on the excellent quality of care children experience.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed (Regulation 45 (1)(4)(a))	31 May 2024

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: Clare Bibby

Registered manager: Jeremy Wood

Inspector

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

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