

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 owns and runs 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: 30 to 31 January 2019

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: 3 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations:

None made

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have thoroughly enjoyable short breaks that add considerably to the quality of their lives.

The staff are highly skilled in supporting disabled children with complex needs, including associated healthcare needs. They provide each child with a very nurturing and highly individualised standard of care that meets their complex needs.

Each child's stay is exceptionally well planned and organised. The manager and staff carefully match the children who stay at the same time. A lot of thought goes into making sure that children get on with one another and receive the best possible support, to get the most out of their stay. Care planning is extremely detailed, and the use of the 'All about me' model provides a highly individualised assessment of each child, which informs staff practice. Likewise, the staff have an excellent understanding of children's education targets and work collaboratively with schools to support children in achieving them. There is close liaison with parents to ensure that there is regular contact if changes occur before each stay. This is complemented by a report of the child's experience that is sent home after every stay.

The staff expertly support and encourage every child to express their wishes and feelings and to make choices about the way that they are supported, who they stay with and how they spend their time. Staff creatively use signs, symbols, photographs and objects of reference, to help children make meaningful choices and to let staff know their needs.

The outstanding quality of care and professional practice is contributing to children's development and improvements in their health and emotional well-being. The staff provide sensitive personal care across a range of complex healthcare needs. The staff encourage each child to participate as much as possible in every aspect of their daily living activities, in order to maximise their opportunities to communicate and learn new skills. The focus on encouraging children to achieve, no matter how small the task, greatly enhances their confidence, self-esteem and individual development. As a result, children make sustained progress and thoroughly enjoy their stays.

The children enjoy a wide variety of stimulating activities both at the home and when

participating in the community. There is a strong focus on ensuring that children have similar opportunities to those of other children, so that they can follow their hobbies and interests. They have the chance to spend time with their friends and plenty of opportunities to take part in a wide range of exciting activities that reflect their interest, such as attending the youth zone and, during the summer, joining weekly sensory group sessions that are held at the home. There has also been a trip to the local radio station as a result of the keen interest of one child in radio broadcasting. Each young person has a scrapbook that captures photographically their experiences while staying at the home, and this is passed on when they leave the service and forms a valuable keepsake. Many of the experiences are things that these children may not be able to do with their families, and this is very much valued by parents.

Professionals reported extremely positively on the experiences their children have while at the home. One social work professional said, 'I think [name of child] has a great time at [name of home]. The staff have been fantastic and have supported my young person at a time of crisis on many occasions. Our multi-agency core group really appreciate[s] their support.' A health professional said, 'Staff are always welcoming. It is a lovely, homely environment with a focus solely on the child.'

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

The staff ensure that children's safety is given the highest priority and they are very well trained in safeguarding matters. The staff have created a very safe, nurturing and supportive home environment. The daily routines and safeguarding arrangements protect children from harm and support their emotional well-being. The staff treat children with dignity and always make sure that children's intimate care needs are met safely and sensitively.

The staff have an exceptionally in-depth understanding and knowledge of the specific needs of each child. This knowledge is informed by risk assessments that are very detailed, highly informative and updated regularly. The staff continually assess the risks to children's safety and adapt care plans accordingly. This allows children to experience and to take considered risks in a similar way to their peers.

The staff are skilled at recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse and are especially knowledgeable about the particular vulnerabilities of disabled children, including those who also have complex healthcare needs. The staff recognise that the smallest changes in a child's behaviour, mood or appearance may indicate that they may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The staff know exactly what they need to do should they have concerns about a child and can confidently explain the action that they would take to safeguard all children in their care.

The staff are knowledgeable about risks to children's health associated with their disability and any long-term medical conditions. The staff are highly competent in supporting children with a range of medical needs, such as epilepsy, or those who have specialist feeding requirements. Staff training is a high priority and is regularly reviewed

and updated to ensure that the staff can respond appropriately and safely care for each child.

The times when children feel upset and may show aggressive or dangerous behaviour are rare. This is because staff know each child incredibly well and engage with them effectively to understand and meet their emotional needs. Staff use exceptionally well-thought-out care plans to create a consistent environment where children feel safe.

Children are empowered to share their views and opinions and to share these in their preferred communication style. These styles include hand movements, sounds, gestures or words, and staff make sure that all carry equal importance. The staff know how to read children's signs and respond to them. This protects children because they understand that their views are important and are listened to, for example, when deciding who delivers their care, or choosing who plays with them, feeds them and puts them to bed.

Children do not go missing from home due to the complexity of their disabilities and the high staffing levels in place to support them. However, the staff are not complacent, and they have a clear understanding of the action to take should a child go missing.

Since the recent service review, the registered manager has continued to ensure that only staff who have the right qualities and attributes are employed to work at the home. As a result, parents are confident about leaving their children at the home because they trust the staff and know that their children receive a very high quality of care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is very experienced and leads by example through providing highly effective leadership. The registered manager leads a tremendously caring, skilled and very experienced staff team. He and the senior staff have carefully steered the team through a recent service review, and it is commendable that the staff team has remained focused and continued to succeed in securing positive outcomes for the children in their care.

The registered manager, senior staff and the staff team have worked hard to create an exceptionally positive and nurturing culture that is improving the lives of the children. The registered manager and staff are single minded in their determination for the children in their care to enjoy every possible opportunity to broaden their experiences and fulfil their potential.

Well-planned staffing arrangements make sure that there are always sufficient knowledgeable, experienced, well-trained and qualified staff available to meet the children's needs. The majority of the staff team members hold a relevant qualification in childcare or have commenced working towards one. Staff performance is closely monitored and, if necessary, appropriate support is put in place to assist staff to fulfil their roles.

The registered manager and senior staff provide each member of staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement. Staff use practice-related supervision and team meetings productively to reflect critically on their professional practice, questioning what approaches have worked well and which were less effective. Staff also have regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through high-quality bespoke training that is tailored to meet the needs of disabled children, for example training about autism spectrum disorder, specialist training in healthcare procedures and training regarding adverse childhood experiences and the impact these have on children. As a result, staff feel very well supported, valued and highly motivated.

The registered manager and staff have built highly effective working relationships with children's parents, social workers, teachers and health workers. They work together very successfully to make sure that the children's assessed needs are consistently met when they come to stay. Feedback from across the board is exceptionally positive, praising staff's commitment, children's progress and the effective communication that the registered manager and his team have with all those involved in the care of the children.

The registered manager is enthusiastic about and dedicated to the ongoing development of the service. He is continually looking at ways in which he can improve the service and uses exceptionally thorough, child-centred and evaluative monitoring systems to understand the quality of care that children receive and how this influences their experiences and outcomes. Likewise, external monitoring is very thorough and is used as a means to improve practice, for example prompting improvement in making the recording of young people's meeting minutes more accessible to children across a range of communication systems. The one recommendation made at the last inspection has been addressed through improved training in the chosen method of behaviour management adopted by the home. There is a strong focus on bespoke individualised approaches to responding to more challenging behaviour.

The workforce development plan also demonstrates that the registered manager has a very realistic and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development going forward.

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

Responsible individual: Maria Nugent

Registered manager: Jeremy Wood

Inspectors

Paul Gillespie, social care inspector
Julia Toller, social care inspector

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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>

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