

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	07/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC397293
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Derby City Council
Registered person address	Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, DERBY, DE1 2FE

Responsible individual	Rodney Jones
Registered manager	Gemma Bullock
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	07/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. Children and young people continue to make good progress in this home. In particular, their self-care skills, progression towards independence and socialisation improve. Consequently, they have a more positive sense of self, better behaviour and more positive relationships. A relative commented: 'He is looking after himself better.' Children and young people have excellent school attendance and are achieving as well or better than expected. They are healthy, and staff support all appointments with health professionals. Emotional and psychological needs are also supported through appropriate services, such as the unit which works with children and young people who have been sexually abused and have attachment difficulties. Children and young people are happy, settled and have very positive relationships with staff. One social worker commented of a child recently admitted to the home: 'She is loving it.' A parent said of another child: 'He has flourished. He is jollier here and is doing a lot better than before.' Staff are very good at learning the best ways of communicating with and understanding children's and young people's wishes and feelings, including those who are non-verbal. They constantly offer choices and respond to their requests. Advocacy is promoted well. The advocate commented: 'Advocacy is not seen as a threat but a vital and important part of the operation of the home.' Children and young people engage in many positive experiences and their interests are fully promoted. For example, they go swimming and play cricket and have holidays in the summer. They are encouraged and supported to use public transport to further their independence and engagement in the community. Transitions both in to and out of the home are planned and managed well to make this a positive experience. For example, staff visit the former placement to meet the child and obtain first-hand information from the carers, even in an emergency. Staff work with transitions workers to facilitate a move to adult services. They also engage well with foster carers to support a child's move to a foster family. Prospective foster carers for a child said: 'They have been brilliant; they have made	

us welcome and given us the heads-up on behaviour and lots of information.'

Children's and young people's needs and routines are captured well in the home's placement plans. Staff also maintain an individual file of achievements and activities so that children and young people have a positive record of their time in the home. The home maintains a case record for each child and young person which contains most of the required information. However, some were incomplete, as documents or information were missing. For example, one case record did not contain an up-to-date personal education plan or looked after child review, and incidents of restraint were not noted within this record as required. Another case record did not have either the statement of educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plan. Not all documents were signed and dated. The manager and staff have access to the local authority's electronic system where these documents may be located, but there was no evidence of cross referencing to indicate that they were actually there. Although this does not have a significant impact on children's and young people's well-being, it is important that the manager and staff have access to the most up-to-date information and that the child's case record gives a complete history.

Monitoring is an improving area. The local authority has confirmed a change in senior managerial arrangements, thereby placing this home in the same line management structure as the other residential provision. The manager is being supported to adapt her current monitoring so that it reflects the comprehensive format that other children's homes in the authority use. The manager is very positive about these changes and uses any learning to improve practice. The monthly reports from the independent visitor are well received and any suggestions acted upon. She also obtains regular feedback from families through the three monthly meetings she holds. Children and young people are consulted weekly. Their targets are regularly monitored and plotted on a spider graph to give a visual representation of the progress made. Additionally, the manager works a late shift each week so she is doing hands-on work with the children and young people and also observing staff practice. Team meetings and supervision are further methods of ensuring the manager is fully informed of the progress children and young people are making and any issues which need addressing.

Children and young people are kept as safe as possible by good staffing levels and staff practice. They do not go missing, and there have been only some minor incidents since the last inspection. The manager has reflected on and learnt from an incident which occurred just prior to the last inspection, and this learning has been communicated to the staff team. Behaviour and risk are well managed through clear written guidance which staff implement. Restraint is used minimally; there have been three incidents since the last inspection, all of which were appropriate. There is good managerial oversight of these, showing reflection and learning about what could have been done to prevent its use.

Partnership working is a strength of the home. Staff and the manager work particularly well with the various schools, and a common theme is that the good

communication promotes consistency, which enables children and young people to settle and do as well as they can. A teacher commented that the home is 'really supportive'. Another said: 'Communication is really good and staff are very child focused.' Staff also work very well in partnership with parents. One parent said: 'I have a really good relationship with the home.' For example, they offer support to promote consistency in relation to routines so that children and young people continue to make progress. They are also flexible and supportive to contact arrangements so that these are positive experiences for everyone, and children and young people maintain their sense of identity.

Two requirements were set at the last inspection. These related to staff qualifications and training, and have been fully addressed. All staff are now enrolled on the appropriate course to obtain the required qualification. Staff have also undertaken training in autism. The manager has been in discussion with the training department to source further appropriate training, for example, sensory integration, sexual abuse, and attachment, and has arranged for a third sector partner to provide ongoing support in relation to autism. The manager is also developing staff so that they are champions in particular areas, such as sexual exploitation, autism, health and safety, and behaviour management. These actions demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that staff develop and maintain their knowledge and skills so that they can provide a more effective and knowledgeable service to support children and young people well. Additional improvements relate to the completion of the independence kitchen, which offers children and young people an appropriate resource to develop their food preparation, cooking and washing-up skills. Each child and young person has their own file which shows the progress they are making in this area.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home which is registered to provide care and accommodation for five (six if same-sex siblings share a bedroom) children and young people with learning disabilities. The statement of purpose specifies that it cares for children and young people on the autistic spectrum.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/07/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
28/08/2014	Full	Good
19/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))	26/02/2016

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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