

SC397293

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home looks after children and young people who have been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and/or with learning disabilities. There are currently five children living at the home.

The home is run by a suitably qualified manager who is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2023	Full	Good
19/05/2021	Full	Good
14/05/2019	Full	Good
03/04/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making good progress. All children are in education and attend regularly. One child has recently been supported to begin accessing a school more local to the home, this has meant the child no longer has a long and tiring commute to school. Staff support in establishing transportation to school that meets the needs of children, recognising that this transition can be difficult for some. This is ensuring children are on time for school and maintaining good levels of attendance.

Children's individual care plans are excellent. They are thorough and child centred, focussing on how staff can support children to regulate their emotions and remain calm. They include important and detailed information which matters most to children, this ensures children get consistent care from all staff. A committed approach by staff has recently reduced incidents for one child who is developing his own sense of self.

All children are supported to spend time with their families and people important to them. Staff support during family time and help to plan meaningful activities in the community that are engaging for the children. One parent said that staff had been friendly and supportive, and this has helped her to manage her feelings connected to her child being in care.

One child is having a planned transition to another home, where he will be able to live with peers who have similar abilities and interests as himself. The manager and staff have thought carefully about how a move to this home will develop his independence skills and nurture established friendships. The child has had the opportunity to spend time at the other home in a manner and pace designed to help him make the move successfully. This has also helped the child to feel positive about this upcoming change.

Children have varied hobbies and activities and a plentiful amount of time outside of the home. Children are given options about what they would like to do and are encouraged to do things they enjoy and that build their confidence. Two children have had the opportunity this summer to go for the first time on a plane which was a challenging but exciting opportunity for them.

Children live in a home that is spacious and enables them to spend time either together or apart. The home does not yet feel like a warm and homely environment. Several areas remain in need of redecoration and personalisation. The manager acknowledges the areas in need of improvement and has advocated for changes with senior leaders, unfortunately change is not occurring at a reasonable pace for these vulnerable children.

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

Serious incidents are rare. When incidents do take place, these are managed well by staff and are recorded in detail. The manager ensures that written documentation includes information about what occurred before, during and after an incident. Staff have a focus on distracting and de-escalating children when they become upset to prevent situations deteriorating. Following incidents managers ensure staff and children have the space to reflect and learn from events.

Some children have difficult relationships with each other. These dynamics are well understood and managed by staff. Staff ensure that children can have time alone where this avoids potential confrontation. Staff achieve the right balance between nurturing relationships and ensuring that each child has the space that they require as growing teenagers.

Children do not go missing from care and are not engaged in risk-taking behaviours. Physical interventions do not occur regularly, where these do happen there is good exploration of the wider context of the intervention, sharing of information and learning directed by the manager. Children can share their feelings following interventions and staff support them to understand why they have been held.

Children have complex health needs, and several children take medication. There are efficient systems in place to manage the administration of medication which is understood by staff. Where errors have occurred these have been thoroughly explored by the manager and clear actions put in place to prevent this happening again.

One child engages in self-injurious behaviour, particularly if they are feeling anxious. The staff understand this behaviour and have ways that they discourage and manage this to prevent injuries being caused. Regular body maps are completed, and staff remain professionally curious about injuries received. Staff do not assume the safety of children and remain inquisitive with each other, involved professionals and family members. This helps to keep children safe who cannot clearly communicate their concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is run by a dynamic management team. They are united in their ambitions for the children and the staff. The manager understands the needs of the children well and spoke passionately about wanting them to meet their potential. The manager's aspirations for the home are well captured in a development plan which sets out clear steps for how improvement targets can be achieved.

The manager has clear oversight of the home, he has developed innovative systems to aid reflection and learning following incidents. This supports staff understanding and encourages adaptive practice in the home. Staff spoken to felt that managers

were approachable and led by example. Consequently, staff feel there is improved dynamics and morale amongst the team.

Staff receive good quality and regular supervisions which considers their wellbeing and explores the staff's understanding of the needs of children in their care. Staff also can come together regularly for team meetings. Managers use this time creatively to affirm positive practice and explore staff's understanding of the regulatory framework.

The manager has developed effective working relationships with involved professionals. They spoke highly of his communication style and his proactive approach to getting children involved in community events. The manager establishes that the needs of children are understood. One professional said, 'I have never met a more determined man than the manager when it comes to advocating for the young people.'

Clear processes ensure that staff are safely recruited to work at the home. References are appropriately sought and verified, and steps are taken to understand staff's work histories. In some instances a lack of exact dates of previous employment has the potential for gaps to be missed, and therefore not be explored. The manager must ensure checks have enough detail for him to be completely assured of the safety of staff working at the home.

The home is visited regularly by an independent visitor who completes a report on the running of the home. These reports have been provided to Ofsted but do not always include required consultation with the children, parents, or other involved professionals. Additionally, the manager has completed a timely report into the care provided to children at the home. This could be further strengthened by including the views of children, parents and external professional going forward.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)(ii)) This relates to the children's living areas requiring repair and decoration to enhance the environment. This requirement is restated.	22 January 2024
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.	22 January 2024

The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

- (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and
- (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

(Regulation 44 (1) (2) (4))

This specifically refers to ensuring independent visitor's reports include consultation with stakeholders and have clear statements about the safety of children within the home.

Recommendations

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risk to them. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: SC397293

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: The Council house, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FS

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: David Sisson

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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