

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	13/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC397293
Type of inspection	Full
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	13/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC397293

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people have made significant progress in all areas of their lives. Their school attendance is excellent, their behaviour improves and they develop life and social skills, such as self-care.
- Children and young people have very positive experiences. They lead full and active lives and their participation in the community is good. They develop new skills and have improved confidence, self-esteem and social interactions as a result of this.
- Consultation is meaningful and results in children and young people having a real voice in how their care and support are delivered and how the home is run.
- Children and young people are kept safe through comprehensive risk management which enables them to participate in stimulating activities while minimising risk.
- Behaviour is effectively managed because staff use a proactive approach to prevent the need for physical intervention or sanctions.
- Relationships with parents are sustained and positive because the staff consult with them regularly, are in good communication with them and actively support contact arrangements.
- Partnership working is effective in ensuring that everyone works consistently to provide support and improve outcomes. This is particularly evident with education providers.
- The manager provides inspirational leadership and empowers staff to do the very best for children and young people. Staff are well supported through regular supervision, team meetings and good communication.
- Improvements in staff training are required to ensure all staff in care roles have the appropriate qualification, and that staff competence is developed through specific training in autism.

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
Ensure that any individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	01/04/2016
Ensure that all employees undertake appropriate professional development, with particular regard to specific training related to caring for children and young people with autism. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	30/10/2015

Full report

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
21/01/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
19/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
27/09/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people have a very positive experience at this children's home. Consequently they make good progress in all areas of their lives. Staff know their needs very well, and comprehensive care planning addresses how these are going to be met. Target setting and regular monitoring ensure that the impact of staff support is evaluated for its success (or otherwise) and plans amended where necessary. As a result, all the children and young people have made good, and in some respects outstanding, progress. For example, children and young people develop their self-care skills so they become less reliant on staff support. This includes areas such as using the toilet, dressing and personal care. Behaviour has also improved significantly, with incidents of aggression significantly decreasing in frequency. Their quality of life improves because of this, as social interactions are more positive and they are able to be involved in the community with greater success. One parent commented: 'My son would not be doing as well without this home. He is doing really well'. A social worker said of one of the children, 'He has made excellent progress'. Perhaps more importantly, a child said, 'I like it here'. All the children and young people have excellent school attendance, and for some this is a significant improvement. The manager and staff tirelessly sought a creative solution to barriers which were in the way of this progress, and with the support of the responsible individual, have achieved significant success. Children and young people are healthy, active and fully involved in the community. Specialist services are accessed as appropriate, such as the complex behaviour service which provides advice and different strategies to manage particularly challenging behaviour. Of particular note is the emphasis on social activities, which has improved with the allocation of roles and responsibilities to specific members of staff. Children and young people do at least two activities in the community each week. These are based on their individual interests, ascertained through wishes and feelings work. Activities include sensory swimming, cricket, bowling, visits to airports, and the cinema. Their inclusion in the community has increased and they have also become more confident as a result of their achievements. Another area of strength is consultation and participation. Children and young people are consulted on a regular basis and their views used to influence the running of the home. For example, the manager and staff have involved them in planning a sensory garden. The children and young people have chosen a water feature, different coloured garden furniture and small tents. They are also going to	

be involved in fund raising for this, and have already planned a car boot sale. Stakeholders have also commented positively about how well staff elicit children's and young people's views, for example, for their statutory review. This ensures they are given a voice in all aspects of their care.

Staff demonstrate a great deal of warmth and speak very positively about the children and young people. They are proud of their progress, celebrate their achievements and want them to do as well as possible. The interactions between staff and the children and young people are friendly and relaxed. For those children and young people without verbal communication, this is expressed through particular ways of relating to each individual staff member. Parents and other stakeholders confirm that their children are happy at this home and are confident that they would know if they were not. One parent said of the staff, 'they care for my son perfectly'.

Children and young people have differing amounts of contact with their families. This is supported and managed very well. Parents comment that they are kept informed of what their child is doing. They also comment that staff are supportive in ensuring the contact with their child is as positive as possible. For example, staff enabled a parent to spend a day with her son at a tourist attraction rather than at home, thus providing a more enjoyable and different experience for both of them. Staff have also advised on using sensory equipment and managing behaviour, thus promoting more positive experiences during family contact. Flexible arrangements have enabled families to 'recharge their batteries' and continue to play a significant and important role in their children's lives. Staff also facilitate contact with prospective foster carers to promote successful transitions to new placements.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They put the safety and well-being of children and young people at the centre of their practice. The ethos of the home is such that there is openness and honesty in highlighting issues of concern, including staff practice, so that learning can be used to make children and young people safer. The manager and staff have improved their responses to potential safeguarding concerns and have learnt from situations where there were shortfalls in their practice. These shortfalls have not had an impact on the safety and well-being of the children and young people concerned. For example, the manager has made it clear to all staff that children's social care should be contacted immediately by telephone if there is an unexplained injury, rather than emailing the allocated social worker. The role and involvement of the local authority designated officer has also been clarified. These improved practices	

ensure that children and young people are safer. In addition, an advocate visits the home on a regular basis, which provides an opportunity for the children and young people to have access to someone independent of the home, should they wish to raise any concerns. However, one child told me he would talk to the manager if he was unhappy about anything and was confident she would listen to him.

Children and young people do not go missing from this home and are not at risk of child sexual exploitation. However, each child and young person has an individual protocol for staff to follow, should they be absent from the home. On the one occasion when a young person did leave the home without permission, this was implemented effectively and he was found and returned very promptly and with no ill effects.

Staff understand the children's and young people's vulnerabilities well. They know that some children and young people may exhibit challenging behaviour towards others and they therefore provide effective supervision to protect them from potential harm. Staff manage behaviour very well. They are aware of the triggers and warning signs and use proactive strategies to prevent the need for physical intervention or sanctions, both of which have been rarely used. Risk is comprehensively assessed and documented so that staff have clear guidance to minimise the risk of harm. This does not, however, mean that children's and young people's experiences are diminished as a result. For example, a young person was able to go on a residential trip with school, which was a very positive and successful experience, because the risk was managed well. A stakeholder commented, 'the staff are vigilant. I am impressed with how they support him'.

Staff are recruited through safe and thorough practices which prevent unsuitable people having contact with children and young people. Children's and young people's safety is further promoted because the environment is safe and secure, with regular health and safety checks undertaken, appropriate fire precautions including personal evacuation plans utilised and appropriate servicing of equipment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post for a year and is currently undertaking the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare, which she is due to complete later this year. She has appropriate experience and has made a big difference to the home during the year. Staff say, 'she has empowered us', 'she is really child focused', and 'she listens to ideas'. Her open management style, her responsiveness to staff and her passion to improve	

children's lives have had a noticeable impact on the ethos of the home and the progress children and young people have made. As a new manager, she has benefited from the direct support and supervision of the responsible individual, which she really values.

Children and young people have identified targets in a number of areas which are regularly evaluated so that staff and the manager can demonstrate the progress they have made. There is regular consultation with parents so that they can contribute to target setting and celebrating achievements. Life story work ensures that a meaningful record is kept of children and young people's time in the home, which they can access at any time.

Partnership working is a strength and an area which has improved. Social workers say that 'communication is very good', and, 'partnership working is excellent'. Other stakeholders comment, 'the home is very good at working with us', and, 'they are incredibly supportive of the school'. Parents are similarly positive about communication and support. This ensures that everyone involved in a child's or young person's life works consistently and that appropriate services are used effectively to promote the best outcomes.

Staff are committed to do the best for the children and young people in the home. They have regular training in areas such as safeguarding, physical intervention, first aid and fire safety to ensure their competence in working with children. However, they have not had specific training in autism, which would further enhance their understanding of the issues these particular children and young people have. Additionally, not all staff have attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare, and some staff roles, such as home care aids, are not currently considered for this qualification. The new Children's Homes Regulations 2015 now require anyone who works in a care role to obtain this qualification by a certain date.

Staff receive regular supervision which enables them to reflect on their practice. They find it supportive and helpful. They also have an annual appraisal which identifies developmental needs as well as celebrating their achievements. They feel they work well as a team, there are good systems to ensure effective communication, and the allocation of specific roles and responsibilities has had a big impact on the way they work. There is increased ownership of specific tasks, such as sports activities, consultation and equality and diversity. Children and young people have really benefited from this.

The requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection have been met. The statement of purpose has been revised to give a more accurate reflection of the service provided. Auditing systems have been implemented to ensure that

records are up to date. The manager demonstrates ambition to continually develop the service for the benefit of the children and young people, and by using the external and internal monitoring systems effectively, she highlights areas which can be improved upon.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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