

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 autism spectrum, and/or have learning disabilities.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 May 2021

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/05/2019	Full	Good
03/04/2018	Full	Good
12/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive a good standard of care. They settle quickly and enjoy living at this home. Although COVID-19 has impacted significantly on activities, children now have lots of opportunity to enjoy social and learning opportunities at home and in the community.

Staff understand the children's complex needs well. The staff carry a communication keyring which contains symbols and pictures. This helps staff to meet the needs of children who use alternative methods to communicate.

Families are helped by the provision of shared care. This enables families to have a break from caring, and for children to spend time with their peers. Families are offered additional nights if needed. Good communication with families ensures that the care is consistent.

Children have complex needs and disabilities. They are referred to specialist services. Assessments are undertaken and staff are provided with advice and information. This helps the staff to provide a good standard of care to children.

Children attend specialist schools. Their attendance is very good. Effective communication with stakeholders ensures that the children attend the right school to meet their educational needs. Any impact on travel is considered and decisions made in conjunction with all professionals.

Some areas of the home require updating and repair. However, the manager has begun a programme of improvements. Two bedrooms have already been decorated and have new flooring. Further developments are planned. This means the environment will be more homely, and better meet the needs of the children.

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

Staff understand the children's risks and vulnerabilities. Risk assessments guide staff in their understanding of the children's needs and provide them with strategies to keep children safe. When children display new and concerning behaviours, staff respond quickly to keep them safe. However, risk assessments are not always updated. This means that potential harm from similar behaviours is not completely minimised.

Staff practice has been good when responding to challenging behaviour. Staff make efforts to de-escalate situations before using any restraint techniques. The manager oversees all restraints and provides feedback to staff. Children's views are sought, as appropriate. Recording of restraints is good.

Children know how to make their needs known. They can make complaints, and the complaints procedure is accessible to children who use alternative methods of communication. Managers take children's views seriously. Complaints are discussed in staff supervision. This means that children are heard, and staff can reflect on and learn from children's feedback.

The manager and staff have demonstrated that they learn and improve practice following any incidents. Mistakes have been made in the administration of medication. However, extensive and robust changes were subsequently made to procedures. This includes further training, additional checklists and a better management oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home has an interim manager. He has the necessary skills and experience for the role. He has experience from working in a similar home for children with learning disabilities. In a short period, he has begun a programme of improvements to the environment.

The manager has ensured that staff continue to update their knowledge and skills, despite the challenges of COVID-19. He has worked with the training team which has delivered a series of online learning. This includes communication training, with a specific focus on the communication methods of children living at this home.

Professionals spoke positively about the care provided. They say that partnership working is good. When concerns are raised about the care of children, professionals are confident that changes will be made quickly. This ensures that the care children receive is consistently good.

The manager has recognised the need to improve communication between managers and staff. Staff morale has been a concern. The manager has developed a daily breakfast meeting. This provides a regular opportunity for the sharing of important information about the children. These meetings have promoted better channels of communication and trust within the team.

Staff have not received regular professional supervision from a manager. This means that staff do not have a regular forum to discuss their care practice and any concerns about the children.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home complies with relevant health and safety legislation (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risk on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the statement of purpose. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

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: Derby City Council, Treasurers Department, Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FE

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Helen Wilson

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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