

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.

The manager was registered October 2022.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2021	Full	Good
14/05/2019	Full	Good
03/04/2018	Full	Good
12/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making progress in several areas. Children have good routines with regular school attendance and regular social activities. Children have been on a trip to London on a train and are looking forward to a holiday abroad. Two children have helped to interview new staff. These opportunities mean that children with complex care needs can join in everyday activities and experiences, regardless of ability or disability.

As children become older, staff support children to develop independence skills in line with their level of need. For some children with complex needs, this may be limited. For others, this means learning to make meals, budget and live more independently. An area of this home is in the process of being transformed into a separate living area, with bedroom, kitchen and lounge, to help to further enhance some children's independence skills.

Children make significant and life-changing progress. One child's social development has been impacted by their need to live as a fictitious character. A consistent approach to care by a dedicated staff team has meant that this child can now enjoy more social and peer-based activities.

Relationships between staff and children are positive. Wherever possible, children are encouraged to live as a family. For instance, children eat around the kitchen table each day. For others who struggle with sitting with their peers, staff provide flexibility so that they can take part in their own way, while being encouraged to engage at their own pace. Managers and staff celebrate all children's achievements and successes, no matter how small they are.

Children have several ways of sharing their views, wishes and feelings about the care that they receive. Regular visits are made by an independent advocate who has specialised skills in communicating with disabled children. The advocate has undertaken work with children so that they know how to say if they are not happy about something.

Children are part of a weekly meeting. This gives staff and children the opportunity to share issues that affect them, learn about essential life skills, and learn about how to keep safe and healthy. For example, children were anxious as they knew a member of staff was unwell and had to go to hospital. Staff taught children about the role of an ambulance. This meant that children were less anxious and learned about different aspects of healthcare support.

Some parts of the children's living environment need updating. There are several areas that require decoration and improvement. Although managers have challenged the department that is responsible for improvement, this has had limited success. Positively, managers have made significant improvements in other areas of this

home, including the addition of a sensory garden that was developed by staff and children.

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

The manager and staff work effectively with stakeholders. Stakeholders say that communication with them is effective. When information about children is to be shared, this is well coordinated. When there are allegations or significant incidents, the manager ensures that there is reflective learning. Where appropriate, managers challenge staff, and they fully explore any concerns identified, in the children's best interests. If required, managers implement changes in practice.

Staff receive training on how to help children to manage and regulate their emotions and behaviours. This includes methods of safe physical intervention. However, due to the staff's strong bonds with children, and their confidence in the use of de-escalation techniques, staff rarely need to use physical intervention.

External professionals report that the care that children receive is good, and the staff meet children's needs well. They recognise the positive effect of children being able to stay in their own community and attend the same school. Both are significant stabilising factors for children.

Children have not gone missing from this home. On one occasion, a child attempted to leave staff when out on an activity. When this occurred, managers and staff followed risk assessments. They actively stayed with and monitored the child, and encouraged them to return home. Managers and staff work effectively with safeguarding agencies, including the police. This coordinated response means that children are more likely to be located more quickly if they did go missing. After any incident, managers ensure that the team reflect on and learn from the incident to help ensure that children are safer in the future.

The administration of medication procedures has improved. The manager has led a successful campaign for a dedicated room to store, monitor and administer medication. Managers have worked closely with the local authority nurse to monitor staff's competence and ability in the safe administration of medication to children. These competency checks are now standard practice at this home. However, the checking of staff's competency could be more effective, to ensure that all recording errors are identified.

Managers ensure that only staff who have been through a robust safer recruitment process get to work with children with a high level of vulnerability. However, managers could strengthen this process further by making a clear record of verbal checks undertaken in respect of references that have only provided limited information.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2022. He and his new deputy are effective leaders. They are aware of their individual strengths and areas for development. They speak passionately about the children. Constant learning from events and incidents, and the management team's passion for improvement, are strengths in this home.

Managers are strong advocates for the rights of children and their families. For example, the manager challenged the local authority to ensure that a safe mode of transport was available to take a child to have time with their family.

The management team has brought a more-organised approach to the running of this home. Staff and managers meet each day for a breakfast meeting. This enables staff to share with managers a thorough overview of the previous shift, and identify any staffing issues, health and safety concerns and upcoming appointments for children. Staff have responded well to this organised approach to care.

The staff team are positive and optimistic. When there are challenges, staff say that they ride through these and concentrate on what is paramount, which is the safety and well-being of the children. Staff say that they have witnessed a great improvement in the running of the home since the current manager took leadership of the home.

Staff are well supported and encouraged to develop. This is achieved in several ways. More-experienced staff now take on the mentoring role of newer staff. This has enabled the sharing of skills. Staff have regular supervision. This supervision now provides an effective forum for staff support and monitoring. Staff are encouraged to be reflective practitioners.

Managers ensure that staff have regular access to training that develops their skills, knowledge, and competence. When staff are employed from a different area of residential childcare, managers provide them with specialised training to help them to meet the complex care needs of children living in this home. Staff have recently undertaken training about epilepsy and safeguarding disabled children. Other staff have undertaken sensory diet training and a sleep practitioner course. This means that staff at all levels of experience have the specialised skills and knowledge to safely care for children with complex social and healthcare needs to a consistently good standard.

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.	14 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they are 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)
- The registered person should ensure that care is taken to ensure that prescribed medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol.

Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: David Sisson

Inspector

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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