

SC424280

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority owns and operates this home. It is registered to provide care for up to two children who may have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

The home is led by an experienced and registered manager.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of state, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2022

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/10/2019	Full	Good
12/06/2018	Full	Good
19/09/2017	Full	Good
01/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living at this home. They speak positively about the staff. The staff identify children's strengths and support them to undertake hobbies and interests. For example, staff supported children to attend a RideWise course to improve their bicycle safety skills. Staff are good at using humour to make children feel at ease and to defuse difficult situations.

Children are supported to maintain their bedrooms to a good standard. Staff support children to express themselves through how their bedrooms are decorated. For example, one child has a graffiti theme. Where children struggle to keep their bedrooms tidy, staff will incentivise and tidy the room with them. This helps children to develop a sense of pride for their rooms and their belongings, and it develops their independent living skills.

Children are doing well with their education. There is good communication between the staff and education professionals. The manager has been proactive in advocating for one child to have extra learning support. This has included a specific learning assessment. As a result, the child passed their exams and was offered a place at college. The manager, staff and senior managers celebrate children's achievements. This helps children to become confident and feel proud of themselves.

Children are making progress. The children have regular discussions with staff about what matters most to them. Management review and evaluation of children's progress are not yet fully effective. For example, areas in which individual children may need more support are not fully explored.

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

Children's relevant documents are sufficiently detailed, and staff understand children's backgrounds and histories. However, when children's risk assessments are updated, the staff are not consistently reading the amended document. This prevents staff having an up-to-date understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities.

The manager took decisive action following concerns that a child was in an unhealthy relationship. The manager was proactive. He quickly raised concerns about the relationship with the relevant, involved professional agencies. Professionals were then able to devise a safety plan to protect the child. The child was supported to complete individual work focused on what constitutes a healthy relationship. This approach was well organised and coordinated, and it kept the child safe.

Children know the house rules and are supported to use electronic devices in a safe manner. If children do not stick to these rules, staff will implement behavioural sanctions. This ensures that children remain safe and adhere to the boundaries put in place by staff. Staff record the use of sanctions clearly, including the reasons for the sanction and the response by the child.

The manager and staff did not record a significant incident when one child hurt another. Additionally, children are not always spoken to following concerning incidents. This prevents children giving their views about incidents they are involved in. Managers and senior staff do ensure that staff receive a debrief following incidents. However, these debriefs are not always signed by those involved. A child's room was searched by staff, and the manager did not evaluate the reason for the search or how it was undertaken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Children like the manager and they are confident to talk to him if they have any concerns or worries. However, there have been two occasions where different children have raised a concern about the care practice of staff. The manager has not formally addressed this matter with the staff involved. Consequently, children may feel that they have not been listened to.

Staff are enthusiastic about their roles. They are committed to the children. Staff training is of a good standard. However, records of staff supervision are not yet kept or maintained to an acceptable standard. For example, there are significant gaps in supervision records. There is also a pattern of supervision sessions not taking place within timescales. The developmental appraisals of staff are not dated or signed, and they present as incomplete.

The manager provides additional training materials to staff to support their development. However, this is not followed up in supervision with staff to see if they have accessed the material or how this has helped to develop their practice. Similarly, where the manager has asked staff to use learning resources with the children, the manager has not then followed this up and checked if this has happened.

Staff have raised some concerns with the manager relating to staff practice on two occasions. The manager has not implemented plans to manage and resolve these concerns. When the manager recruits new staff to the home, the safer recruitment checks need strengthening to ensure children are safeguarded.

The manager ensures that children experience meaningful, organised transitions when they join and leave the home. For example, staff wrote to one child describing everything that 'they loved about him'. This child stays in touch and visits the home for his Christmas lunch.

The manager has taken action to meet the statutory requirement and recommendations from the last inspection. The manager promptly implemented an action plan and met these in full.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(c)(f)(h)) This specifically relates to the need for the manager to ensure that staff supervisions and appraisals take place regularly and are recorded with sufficient detail. Safer recruitment practices require strengthening. The manager should oversee and evaluate the progress that children make in the home. Incidents and complaints should be recorded effectively and evaluated by the manager, and appropriate action taken.	01 April 2022

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: SC424280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Registered provider address: Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered manager: Marcel Reid

Inspector

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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