

SC424351

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 May 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 9 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people say they are 'happy' in this home.
- Young people make good progress in all areas of their lives given their starting points. As a result, they are safer and their futures are likely to be more positive.

- Safeguarding arrangements are robust. When incidents occur, effective intervention ensures that young people are safe. Over time, safeguarding incidents have reduced.
- Partnership working is a particular strength of this home. Social care professionals commend this home and confirm staff's commitment to collaborative working.
- Relationships between staff and young people are very positive. Staff enjoy spending time with young people both within and outside of the home. This replicates a family lifestyle.
- Young people benefit from stability and consistency of routines. The management and the staff team are stable. This means young people have continued to receive a good standard of individualised care.
- Staff support young people to enjoy positive and well-planned contact with their families. This helps to promote young people's family heritage, identity and links with important people in their lives.
- Leadership and management arrangements are excellent and ensure that the home operates effectively, for the benefit of young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Managers need to improve on methods of consultation with young people. This is to ensure that young people have ample opportunity to express their views about what happens to them and what happens in the home.
- Residential care plans lack clarity. This means staff and young people may not understand the current care planning arrangements. Young people should be actively encouraged to contribute to these care plans.
- Supervision records do not routinely reflect supervisions which focus on children's experiences, needs and plans. This does not have a direct impact on young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/10/2016	Full	Good
08/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/07/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. With specific regard to ensuring that residential action plans provide information and clarity to both children and staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people say they are happy living in this home. When they have worries, concerns and anxieties they readily share their feelings with managers and staff. Social care professionals confirm that some young people 'love' the home and don't want to move to alternative placements.

Young people make good progress from their starting points. Progression is not linear, but has dips and peaks. This is because young people are dealing with the impact of past trauma, abuse and neglect. Positive relationships with trusted staff, combined with specialist support, enable young people to work through issues. As a result, young people thrive and develop.

Young people have made fantastic progress with their education. One young person has fully engaged to reintegrate into mainstream school and achieved 100% attendance. Other young people have persevered with studies to take examinations. Where young people are making choices in relation to training and apprenticeships, the home works closely with appropriate agencies to find a suitable provision. One

young person was successful in securing a part-time job. These achievements are essential to improve prospects and life chances for young people when they leave care.

The home provides a healthy environment. Staff ensure that young people access relevant services to meet their physical, psychological and emotional needs. Young people receive prompt medical attention when they are ill. Routine medicals, along with dental and optical appointments, ensure monitoring of overall well-being. This means young people benefit from comprehensive health care that promotes good health.

Staff like to spend time with young people helping them with their social and recreational activities. Sometimes this involves transporting young people to activities; at other times, staff take part in activities. This support strengthens the bonds and relationships which staff have with young people. It also enables young people to take part in activities which they may not have the confidence to do on their own. This means young people learn to integrate socially, develop new skills and expand their horizons. One young person said: 'I have fun! The staff are fun!'

It is the culture of the home that all young people learn about and contribute to the running and maintenance of the home. This is not enforced; it has developed through staff being strong role models in performing domestic tasks. Young people learn age-appropriate and ability-appropriate skills on a daily basis. Consequently, over time, young people practice life skills such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and, where appropriate, budgeting. This means they develop skills that will benefit them as they move into independence.

Staff ensure that young people enjoy safe and well-organised family contact. Contact arrangements are in line with individual care plans and are frequently supervised by staff. The relationships between staff and family members are strong. This promotes good communication. Consequently, staff and families know and understand the needs, risks and plans for young people.

Young people are valued and feel that staff listen to their views. However, there are two separate, but related, areas of practice which need strengthening. Firstly, there is a lack of ongoing and meaningful consultation with young people. This inhibits young people's participation in care provision. Secondly, residential care plans lack clarity. They need to be documents which young people contribute to and understand.

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

The management of risk is very good in this home. Managers and staff have an excellent understanding of risk assessment and risk reduction. Clear risk assessment records provide staff with clarity about managing risk-taking behaviours of individual young people. Staff implement action plans and work with young people to educate them on risks. As a result, over time, risk-taking behaviours decrease.

Some young people require a high degree of safeguarding intervention. The management and the staff team are appropriately trained, knowledgeable and skilled to effectively manage complex needs. Young people confirm that they feel safe and that staff teach them to keep themselves safe.

When young people demonstrate self-injurious behaviours, the well-trained staff team provides appropriate support to safely manage such behaviours and reduce risks. Staff work proactively with specialist outside agencies, such as the child and adolescent mental health service, psychiatrists and counselling services. Consequently, risks reduce and young people are kept safe.

Incidents of young people going missing are exceptionally low. When young people are absent from the home, staff act as a good parent in locating the young person. When this is not possible, agreed protocols with the police ensure a rapid response. Young people receive a welcome return to the home and are encouraged to discuss issues in relation to being absent. As a result, staff benefit from gaining insight into the behaviours and the associated risks.

Staff ensure a robust and swift response to suspicions of sexual exploitation. Managers ensure a timely multi-agency response to assess, plan and respond to possible safeguarding concerns. The registered manager has effective and cooperative links with safeguarding agencies and the local police service. This means the multi-agency team acts on concerns about the safety or welfare of young people in a timely manner.

Behaviour management is effective. There have been very few physical interventions since the last inspection. Physical interventions with one young person are no longer necessary. This is because of consistent boundaries and routines, and the creative use of incentives. Records of physical interventions are clear, factual and evaluated by the manager. Positive staff relationships are the pivotal factor to promote positive behaviours.

The health and safety of young people, staff and visitors within the home is a priority. A recent health and safety audit and a visit from the fire safety officer confirm that this is a safe home. The home has a continual programme of maintenance, which ensures timely repair and remedial work. Health and safety checks, including fire equipment and drills, are current, and environmental risks assessments are in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leadership and management arrangements for this home are very good. The registered manager is suitably qualified, with a lot of experience as a social care practitioner and manager of children's homes. She manages two children's homes which are in close proximity. In her absence, a competent deputy oversees the management of the home. This means the home operates effectively and promotes improved outcomes for each young person.

The responsible individual and registered manager know the needs of each young person. They have high expectations from all professionals to deliver the best possible care. They advocate effectively to ensure that young people have their individual needs met and that their life chances improve.

This home benefits from a well-established permanent staff team. In discussions with staff, they all confirmed a strong team culture and high levels of support within the team, and from managers. There is minimal use of agency staff. When this does happen, managers use reputable staff and put them on a predictable rota. Good staffing arrangements ensure that young people receive consistency of care by a team they know well.

Managers ensure that staff receive support and professional development. These are provided through regular supervision and appraisal. However, some supervision records fail to reflect child-focused case discussions. All staff have obtained the relevant residential child care qualification. Additionally, staff are required to engage in a comprehensive training programme. This ensures that staff develop professionally and can deliver high standards of care to young people. All staff have up-to-date mandatory training and additional child-specific training. As a result, young people benefit from a well-trained, appropriately supervised and well-supported staff team.

Partnership working is excellent. Social workers commend managers and staff in promoting improved outcomes and safeguarding young people effectively. Social workers have described the home as: 'Brilliant!' They comment on the professionalism and dedication of the team. One social worker stated: 'They are a committed and dedicated staff team who really do care about the young people.' Additionally, social workers highlight that staff ensure effective communication and information sharing. The registered manager regularly attends multi-agency meetings. She has rarely needed to professionally challenge partners. However, she has clear expectations in relation to partner agencies. She has a commitment to challenge when agencies are not fulfilling their obligations to a young person.

The statement of purpose accurately reflects the operation of the home. The statement of purpose outlines that: 'We aim to challenge any discrimination and create a culture where young people and staff feel safe from oppression.' The promotion of tolerance, equality and diversity are central to care provision. The care provision accurately reflects this statement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC424351

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Registered provider address: Loxley House, Station Street, NOTTINGHAM NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered manager: Emma Read

Inspector(s)

Amanda Ellis, social care inspector

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