

SC424351

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and operated by a local authority. The home provides care for up to two children who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is led by an experienced and registered manager.

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: 24 to 25 August 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: 1 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/05/2019	Full	Good
16/05/2018	Full	Good
22/05/2017	Full	Good
09/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Some children have lived at this home for several years. They have experienced consistent care and stability. This has helped them make good progress. Transitions for children are well planned. For example, for some children aiming to move to semi-independent accommodation, their plans and timescales are, at times, altered to give them the best chance of success. This means that children's plans are flexible enough to change with the needs of children.

Children spend time with staff. However, some children are selective about who they choose to do activities with. Additionally, daily routines could be strengthened with more attention to nurturing children to develop crucial bonds between children and staff. For example, children do not have a routine where they eat meals with staff or each other. Additional training for staff in attachment is recommended, to better equip them to build meaningful relationships with children.

Children are supported to be independent. They learn how to cook, clean and attend education independently. Children's progress in education is mixed. However, staff are proactive in trying to create learning opportunities for children, to help them make progress.

Children attend health appointments and are supported to maintain a good sleep routine. Children are encouraged to stay fit, and all children own their own bikes. However, more could be done to meaningfully record memories for children to detail their health journey.

Children are encouraged to spend time with their friends in the local community. This helps children develop very important relationships and develop social skills.

Staff understand the importance of children seeing their families. This is supported by staff, where possible. If children are not seeing family members, then staff and children understand the reasons for this. Staff support children to cope with the emotional impact of not seeing family members.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging. For example, the local mosque was closed during Eid, which affected one child, and some staff were unwell with the virus. However, despite challenges, children have coped through periods of isolation and the staff have pulled together as a team.

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

Children are well safeguarded because there is good communication with partner agencies. For example, the location risk assessment is detailed, and risks are updated in line with information provided by involved agencies, such as the police. However,

staff knowledge in relation to ligatures and contextual safeguarding could be improved.

Children's risk assessments are sufficiently detailed. They provide staff with guidance and direction on how to manage and reduce risk to children. As a result, children have been kept safe and over time become safer.

Children's relationships are generally good. Bullying is not a concern for the manager and staff. Children are rarely involved in incidents. However, there has been one incident where both children's needs were not considered equally. The staff team's understanding of the processes relating to bullying procedures could be further strengthened.

Children know how to complain if they are unhappy. The manager and staff ensure that children understand the complaints procedure. When complaints have been made, children have been listened to and action has been taken.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is well established and respected by staff. The manager is also prominent within the local authority. She attends various forums and uses her experience and knowledge to improve outcomes for children. She understands the complex histories of each child. The manager and staff consider very carefully if new children should come to live at the home. This is because they do not wish to disrupt children's progress.

The manager and staff take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They take immediate action when there are any concerns for a child's safety or welfare. For example, when children have struggled with low mood, the manager has requested additional staff support. They have liaised with therapeutic services to put immediate safety plans in place for children. This means that children quickly get the help and support they need.

The staff team is very stable; there are no vacancies and staff retention is also good. Team meetings take place, although these have been more sporadic during the COVID-19 pandemic, with attendance at meetings not always being good.

Staff receive regular and individual supervision meetings with the manager. The manager ensures that staff talk openly about their welfare. Staff can also raise any concerns they may have. However, support offered to staff is not sufficiently detailed in supervision records in terms of an agreed action plan.

The practice of formally reviewing and tracking children's progress is not yet established. This is an area for development. Additionally, children are not communicating their views of the home to the independent visitor. This hinders the manager's and leader's ability to capture the views of children about the care and support they receive.

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

Recommendations

- The responsible person should ensure that regulation 11(2) sets out the expectations on staff in building a positive relationship with each child and helping the child develop skills to have positive relationships with others. 'Others' includes individuals both inside and outside the home, such as other children in the home, staff, family members, siblings, previous carers and friends (in accordance with their relevant plans). The care planning standard provides further detail in respect of contact with parents, relatives and friends. This specifically relates to the manager enabling children to better communicate and interact with the independent visitor. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.6)
- The responsible person should ensure that the capacity and competence of staff to build constructive, warm relationships with children that actively promote positive behaviour provides the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. Where necessary, they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. This specifically relates to staff being supported to understand the attachment needs of children who may have suffered from trauma. Furthermore, wider professionals could be better used to support the relationships between staff and children.

When incidents happen for children, the registered manager should ensure that all children's wishes are advocated for equally. Care provided could be adapted to ensure that children receive care that better mirrors that of a family home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)

- The responsible person should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate that a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. Staff knowledge could be updated to enable them to better recognise and respond to risk. This is particularly apparent when staff are caring for children who are at risk of ligature and/or exploitation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- The responsible person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with: each child; the home's staff; each child's family/carers where appropriate; and professionals involved in the care or protection of each child, including their social worker, independent reviewing officer, teachers, clinicians and other health professionals, etc. The registered manager could better monitor, record and reflect on children's progress. Due to this system not being yet in place, children do not have regular conversations with staff about their progress. Recordings for children could be made more meaningful. It is important for children to understand their life's journey regarding

their health and education. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. Supervisions do not currently detail what support has been offered to staff to support them with their development or health. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 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

Andi Lilley-Tams, Social Care Inspector

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