

# SC442777

Registered provider: Warrington Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It offers short breaks to a maximum of three children who have learning and/or physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2012.

Children were spoken to as part of this inspection.

**Inspection dates:** 28 to 29 January 2020

|                                                                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
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|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

**Date of last inspection:** 30 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 30/01/2019      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 03/10/2017      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 13/03/2017      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 19/07/2016      | Full            | Outstanding             |

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

### **Recommendations**

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('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: outstanding**

This children's home provides short-break care for children with disabilities and complex needs. The home provides exceptional care for these children. The children receive individualised care from an extremely nurturing and child-centred staff team. The care that children receive from staff adds considerably to their experiences.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that contribute to their growth and development. An example of this is that children visit elderly people in a day centre in the local area, and there are plans for more visits. This provides children with the opportunity to develop safe relationships with older people and to participate in local community provision.

The staff work well with parents, social workers and education providers to ensure that children's complex health needs are met. Medication is managed well, and staff are trained in administering medication.

Children's views are gained regularly through communication tools that are individual to each child. The staff team's deep understanding of individual children's behaviour greatly contributes to this. The children who stay at the home use a wide variety of communication tools, and the registered manager ensures that staff receive training to use these tools effectively. This means that all children can be involved in their care when they stay at the home, for example by choosing meals and activities.

Staff are highly skilled and have a sound knowledge and understanding of the children. This ensures that meaningful participation is achieved in the home. For example, children are involved in planning their short breaks because staff spend time asking them who they would like to stay with. This means that staff promote children's friendships at the home, giving them the chance to interact positively with their peers.

Staff strive to understand the children whom they care for, and they use research to inform their practice. This research is not only contributing to the exceptional care that the children receive, but is also being used to inform and educate parents, carers and other professionals in the local area. For example, staff are providing workshops in the local authority to help people understand the complexities in caring for children with disabilities and complex needs.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Staff regard children's safety as a top priority, and children are cared for in a safe environment. The registered manager carefully considers staffing ratios to ensure that children receive the highest level of support and supervision both inside and outside the home. This contributes to the overall safety of children staying at the home.

There are individual risk assessments in place. These assessments support children to take appropriate risks, which enables them to enjoy various activities. Individual behaviour support plans help staff address children's behaviour in a consistent way. The inspector observed staff caring for children in line with their individual behaviour support plans. This demonstrates that staff provide the children with a consistent approach.

Incidents of physical intervention are rare. When physical intervention has been used, it has been necessary and proportionate to ensure children and staff's safety. These incidents are well recorded and evaluated by the registered manager. Staff reflect on incidents, and this helps them identify triggers for some children's behaviour.

The home has strong links with other safeguarding professionals. The registered manager has an effective relationship with the local police community safety officer. This enables the registered manager to receive information about the local area, which is shared with staff at team meetings. This educates staff about risks in the local area.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The leadership in this home is a notable strength. The registered manager is an inspirational, ambitious and confident leader. She is supported by an equally ambitious assistant manager, and together they inspire a strong and committed staff team. The managers lead by example and they innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality of care for children. For example, they are working with a provider from another local authority to help this provider transform their short-break care. This is because this provider considers the children's home to be an exemplar of short-break care.

The consistent and stable staff team is another notable strength. Staff morale is high, and staff are very positive about working in the home. The registered manager uses research to motivate staff. This research encourages staff to think about their individual roles within the staff team and to recognise individual strengths. This contributes to a positive and aspirational culture in the home.

The staff are also positive and complimentary about the managers. The staff team members enjoy their work and strive to improve the care that they provide to the children. The staff are provided with regular supervision. Some staff described supervision as supportive and helpful, and supervision provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and discuss developments in the home.

Staff can improve their record-keeping by ensuring that all documents include the necessary information about children. A recommendation is made to reflect this improvement. This has not had an impact on the children's overall safety and progress.

Staff meetings are regular and well attended by the staff team. Guest speakers attend staff meetings to provide staff with information and training to help them in their roles. The guest speakers are relevant to the children who stay at the home, for example a

child's speech and language therapist and a specialist nurse for neuro-developmental conditions.

The managers have a clear understanding of the progress that children are making. They know the children extremely well, and the inspector observed very warm and affectionate relationships between the manager and the children.

Staff have excellent relationships with children's families, social workers and education providers. This means that staff can provide the best all-round care for children. The inspector spoke to numerous professionals who were extremely positive about the care that the staff provide for the children.

## 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:** SC442777

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Children's Services Directorate, New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 2NJ

**Responsible individual:** Sharon Cooper

**Registered manager:** Clare Pickering

## **Inspector**

Catherine Fargin, social care inspector

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