

SC488596

Registered provider: Derby City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by Derby City Council. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home. Three children had very recently moved out.

The manager is registered with Ofsted and is currently undertaking the required leadership qualification.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 2 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/08/2023	Full	Good
25/07/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/12/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have extremely positive experiences while living in this home. All children have made excellent progress. This is because of the high-quality, consistent care provided to them by skilled, kind and caring staff members.

Staff are exceptionally skilled at building positive relationships with children. As a result, children form strong and trusting relationships with them. This provides children with a secure base from where they can develop. A child who recently moved on positively from the home said, 'The support I have had has been great. [Name of home] has been the first place I have felt at home, it will always be my home, and I will always stay in touch with the staff.'

Staff support children to make good educational progress. All children have, or have had, bespoke packages of education that have met their needs well. One child has recently sat their GCSE examinations. They now excitedly await their results and look forward to their future.

Staff meet children's health needs to a high standard. This is complemented by the help and support provided by a looked after children's nurse and a commissioned assistant psychologist who are linked to the home and visit regularly. When children require more specialist support or assessments, staff access these without delay. Consequently, children receive the right support at the right time to promote their physical and emotional health.

Regular, high-quality direct work carried out by staff with children is making a tangible and positive difference to their lives. One of many particularly strong examples involved staff using 'mood cards' and 'get talking cards' each evening with a child to help them to express their feelings and anxieties. This resulted in the child being able to make sense of the world, they became calmer and better able to regulate their emotions.

Children enjoy participating in a wide range of enriching, exciting experiences and activities, such as sports, drama, volunteering, participation with the children in care council and going on regular days out. Children have fun, and their sense of confidence and achievement grows.

In recent months, because of the extremely positive progress made by children, staff have supported two children to successfully transition on to foster care, one child to return home and one child to successfully move into semi-independent accommodation. The preparation and planning for these transitions were meticulous. Children have extremely positive endings, which includes a celebration party and presenting memory books, with letters from staff. These serve as a reminder to children of their positive experiences and progress and of how much staff loved and cared about them.

Children's views are at the centre of all practice. At every opportunity, staff seek and listen to children's views via feedback forms, one-to-one-sessions and regular children's meetings. As a result, children feel valued and respected in the home.

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

Children feel safe because of the consistent, predictable care they receive and the extremely positive, trusting relationships they have with staff.

Staff know children exceptionally well. They understand and consistently follow comprehensively written, and regularly updated, risk assessments and placement plans. This helps to keep children as safe as possible.

Well-coordinated multi-agency packages of support provided to children help to make them safer. For example, for one child, effective partnership working between staff, the commissioned assistant psychologist, other health professionals and the child's social worker has resulted in the level of risk in relation to self-harm reducing from high to low. This is significant progress for this child.

Proactive and bespoke behaviour support strategies used by staff are highly effective. By staff using a relationship-based and nurturing approach, children feel calmer and safer. A child explained, 'I feel safe because of how the staff care for me. They are fair and supportive, and I know where I stand with them.' Because of the staff's skills in de-escalating challenging situations, staff rarely need to physically restrain children, and significant incidents have drastically reduced. On the rare occasions when it has been necessary to restrain a child, or following any significant incident, staff record in detail what has happened. The manager carries out thorough debriefs with staff and children. Management oversight of all incidents is robust. This results in reflection and learning, which the manager then disseminates to the staff team. This prevents reoccurrences.

Children rarely go missing from the home. However, if they do, staff follow children's individual missing-from-care protocols to ensure that they are quickly located and safely returned home. Staff promptly request independent return home interviews. These interviews contribute to planning to prevent further incidents.

The manager takes any allegations made by children against staff very seriously. Children are listened to, investigations are thorough, timely and proportionate, and the manager consults with the right external professionals. This safeguards children.

Children know how to raise complaints, and staff encourage them to do so if they have any concerns at all. A child spoken to during the inspection confirmed this. They said, 'I was listened to when I made complaints, and they were resolved to my satisfaction.' The manager proactively uses complaints to inform improvements to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager, who has become registered since the previous inspection, is an inspirational leader. The positive difference she has made to this home in terms of children's experiences and the upskilling of the staff team is quite remarkable. The manager is incredibly calm, organised and child focused. She and her newly appointed deputy manager model high standards of practice. They motivate staff, who share their vision to continually improve children's experiences and progress. Morale in the home is extremely high.

Excellent planning and support provided to children when they move into the home, even in an emergency, help them to settle quickly. Careful consideration of the needs of new children moving in and of the needs of children already resident means that new admissions have not negatively impacted on the children already living in the home.

The manager has had a sharp focus on developing staff as a team and individually. Staff have received an extensive range of mandatory and specialist training. This, as well as regular input from a commissioned psychological service and the looked after children's nurse, is helping staff to develop great insight into children's behaviours and needs. Staff are skilled at building relationships with children and in understanding the reasons for behaviours and supporting children to make sense of their histories and experiences. Staff are helping children to move on positively in their lives.

The manager has further enhanced the staff's skills through excellent induction training for new staff, high-quality, regular and reflective supervision, and impactful team meetings. The manager has created a culture of learning and development, including learning from research, which staff have embraced.

In addition, clear staff practice guidance, good practice examples and an extensive range of practice tools implemented by the manager are assisting staff to undertake high-quality direct work. Staff now write records and key-work sessions directly to children in a sensitive, strengths-based and celebratory style. This has been impactful. It has helped children to reflect and learn from the work they have undertaken, and it has helped them to know who will be supporting them and how moving forward.

Partnership working is a strength. All external professionals spoken to during the inspection were highly complimentary about levels of communication between them, the manager and the staff, and the effectiveness of multi-agency working. External professionals used words such as 'amazing', 'exceptional' and 'cannot fault them' to describe the manager and her staff. This multi-agency working is helping to ensure that children receive the help and support they need so that they continue to make excellent progress while they live in the home.

A full range of quality assurance activities are providing the manager with an excellent line of sight of the quality and impact of practice in the home and insight into children's experiences. This, and regularly obtained feedback from children, professionals, parents, and staff, informs continual development and service improvements.

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: SC488596

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FS

Responsible individual: Sharon Green

Registered manager: Almas Zahid

Inspector

Rachel Griffiths, Social Care Inspector

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