

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC036732
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Nottinghamshire County Council
Registered person address	Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP

Responsible individual	Vonny Senogles
Registered manager	Lynda Rhodes
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC036732

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is judged as good in all areas, although there are some outstanding practices. Some shortfalls have been identified but there is no evidence of these shortfalls having affected the well-being and safety of young people.
- Staff are committed to improving the lives of young people; they are skilled at communicating with young people and have a sound knowledge of their needs.
- A new building was completed in October 2015 which has improved the quality of care provided. The home has excellent facilities for young people to enjoy and improve their independence skills. Staff did some excellent work to prepare all young people for transferring to the new home.
- Young people receive a very good standard of individualised care and make good progress given their starting points.
- The management of young people's behaviour is very good and they make progress in changing their challenging behaviours. Restraint is very rarely used, which is testament to the skills of the staff team.
- Working with parents is a key strength, which ensures young people's holistic needs are met and that staff and parents work collaboratively for the best outcomes for young people. Feedback from parents, carers and other professionals is very positive about the care and support young people receive. Comments received from parents include: 'The staff are very caring and listen and take on board the child in care', and, 'The staff are amazing, we trust them 100% with our child.'
- Areas for improvement relate to recruitment practices, obtaining education, health and care plans for those young people using the service over 75 days, care records and individual risk assessments in relation to young people going swimming.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. This is with specific reference to ensuring that: two references are obtained and verified for all employees; there is written evidence that a full employment history has been obtained; and any gaps in employment identified are explored and explanations recorded. (Regulation 32 (3) (d))	1 March 2016
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. This is with specific reference to keeping copies of education, health and care plans for those young people who receive short breaks for over 75 days in total in any 12 month period. (Regulation 36 (1))	1 March 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Children's home staff should take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child's needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. This is with specific reference to producing individual written risk assessments for young people who go swimming. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.7)
- Ensure that children's case records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by the local authority and is registered to provide short breaks for a maximum of eight children with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
07/08/2014	Full	Good
18/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
01/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>Young people receive a very good standard of individualised care from a committed staff team who know them very well. Each young person has a care plan (known as a residential action plan) and a risk assessment; these are reviewed regularly. These records are generally of a good standard, but some care plans lack details of how staff support young people with certain needs. For example, some care plans lack details about the support young people require with intimate personal care. Staff know young people very well and there is no evidence that this has had an impact of the delivery of care and support. However, it does have the potential to affect the ability of new staff to meet young people's needs and to provide consistency. Care records are not always signed and dated by the author.</p> <p>A number of young people receive short breaks of over 75 days, which helps to support their families as well as give them a range of experiences they may not otherwise have. However, the home does not have copies of these young people's education, health and care plans or personal education plans. This has the potential to hinder staff's ability to meet young people's needs and work consistently with parents, carers and other relevant professionals.</p> <p>Comments received from young people and their parents and carers demonstrate that they are happy using the service and enjoy the opportunities provided. A young person told the inspector that they are really happy with the new building as there are more things to do and they can make drinks and snacks for themselves. A parent commented: 'The staff are excellent, they deliver excellent care and react to situations very quickly!' Young people are relaxed in the company of staff and have trusting and fun relationships with them. This helps young people to feel safe and be safe.</p> <p>Young people make good progress given their starting points. They acquire skills which help them become more independent. Their behaviour improves, which enables them to engage in more activities. A parent commented at their child's review meeting that their child is now a lot less anxious; there are fewer challenging behaviours and he is now able to communicate his needs/wants and can tell you when he is getting upset. Young people's emotional resilience also improves. This is evident in how well young people have adapted and settled in the new building.</p> <p>Parents and carers retain overall responsibility for their child's health. Staff work</p>	

collaboratively with parents, carers and a range of professionals to ensure young people's physical and psychological health needs are met. Staff receive a range of mandatory training as well as training specific to individual health conditions. They have recently received training from the child and adolescent mental health service team on sleep patterns and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Staff work closely with schools, and this is confirmed by social workers and school staff. Learning continues in the home, which helps to increase young people's knowledge and skills. Regular young people's house meetings provide opportunities to learn and acquire skills, including learning how to keep themselves safe. For example, young people have made smoothies and have engaged in activities on anti-bullying.

Empowerment of young people is at the heart of practice. Staff are skilled at communicating with young people, which includes interpreting non-verbal communications. Every effort is made to enable each individual to make contributions to their daily life and future planning. Staff have introduced new books for young people to include photographs of activities they engage in which they can show their families and use at their review meetings. This also helps to celebrate young people's achievements. For example, one young person's book contains a photo of him on an activity which is also recorded as, 'The day I met the climbing wall and conquered it.'

Young people benefit from using short break services in a new building which takes into account their needs. Staff worked hard with young people to support this transition, which has had true benefits including demonstrating their emotional resilience. Young people have adapted very well to their new setting and are enjoying the new facilities and increased space and independence. Some young people are now making drinks and snacks, and other young people's sleeping patterns have improved.

The home is well designed and is decorated and furnished to a very high standard. Young people have more space and facilities to enjoy themselves and improve their independence skills. For example, in addition to the main kitchen, there is a kitchen where young people can make snacks and drinks and use for activities such as baking. There is a sensory room and a conservatory which has a large range of different games and activities for young people to enjoy. Four bedrooms have en-suite shower rooms, which promotes independence and privacy and dignity.

Staff are committed to providing young people with a range of leisure activities based on individual as well as group needs. This includes trying new experiences which they may not have been able to experience before. Staff do not let barriers prevent young people from trying activities. Young people have benefited from going to different museums, going on boat trips, and playing crazy golf.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>There is a clear commitment by the staff team to keep young people safe. However, appropriate recruitment practices are not always followed, which means young people are not fully safeguarded. Two references are not obtained for staff who already work for the local authority. There is no recorded evidence that references are verified and that gaps in employment have been explored.</p> <p>Staff support young people to develop skills and experience a range of opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment. Individualised risk assessments are in place and give clear details about how to manage risks. There are also a range of generic risk assessments for different activities. However, individual risk assessments are not completed in relation to young people going swimming. This does not fully protect young people from the risk of harm.</p> <p>Staff have an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs and risks. They also receive a range of safeguarding training. As a result, young people are safe and secure at the home; this is confirmed by parents and carers. Comments received from parents include, 'My son loves going and I feel safe and can relax and enjoy my time while he is there', and, 'I feel very confident that my son is safe and contained and very well looked after whilst at the home and I feel relaxed and assured while he is there.'</p> <p>The complaints procedure is produced in a range of formats to meet young people's communication needs. They are supported to make complaints, although this is rare. Since the last inspection one complaint has been made by a young person. Records demonstrate this was dealt with promptly and feedback was given to the young person about actions taken, including explanations as to why some of his requests could not be agreed. This gives young people confidence that their concerns are listened to and helps them feel safe.</p> <p>The management of young people's behaviour is very good. Emphasis is on using de-escalation and diversion strategies which staff are successful in implementing. This is evident as physical intervention is not used often, which is testament to the skills of the staff team. Records of behavioural incidents are clearly recorded and monitored by the management team.</p> <p>The incidents of young people going missing are rare due to high staffing levels and security of the premises. However, staff recognise the vulnerabilities of young people should they go missing. There is specific guidance to follow, which complements the joint protocol on children who runaway or go missing from home</p>	

or care. The registered manager has provided the police missing person's co-ordinator with details of each young person to ensure the police understand their particular vulnerabilities should they ever go missing. This is good practice. Additionally, when young people go out, staff take a folder with them which includes protocols of actions to take in the event of emergency situations, and individual profiles of young people. These systems help to minimise incidents of young people going missing and help to keep them safe.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment because staff are good at managing health and safety. Fire safety practices, including regular testing of fire equipment and regular fire drills, are carried out.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>The service is run by an experienced and qualified management team who provide a good level of management support to the staff team. The registered manager has substantial experience of working in children's homes, and became the registered manager of this service in 2004. She has a range of relevant qualifications, which include a level 4 qualification in working with children and young people, a level 4 in management and a post-graduate diploma in public management.</p> <p>Young people are cared for by a committed and skilled staff team who are intent on providing the best possible care. Staff are well trained and receive regular supervision and support from the management team. They feel listened to and valued. Staff work well as a team, and detailed daily handovers ensure staff are kept up to date with young people's care and progress. Regular staff meetings are held, which helps to ensure consistency in working with young people and allows for team development.</p> <p>There is a real commitment to improving the quality of care provided, including increasing young people's opportunities and experiences. A parent commented: 'A big thank you for all the work done as he would not have had the opportunities that he gets without coming here.' Since the last inspection, person-centred meetings have been introduced. This means young people's care is regularly reviewed which recognise progress, identify areas of needs and detail future targets. Management audits of files have also been introduced to ensure young people's records reflect the care and support they need.</p> <p>There is a clear statement of purpose which informs parents, carers and professionals about the services provided. Practice is in line with the statement.</p>	

For example, empowerment, choice, and respect for privacy and dignity are embedded in day-to-day practice. Children's guides are produced to meet individualised needs.

The management team and staff undertake a range of internal monitoring systems. This shared ownership helps to ensure shortfalls in practice are identified. An independent visitor undertakes monthly visits, and copies of their report are sent to Ofsted as required. The registered provider is taking action to improve the quality of these reports to ensure they complement internal monitoring systems.

Staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and a range of professionals, which helps to ensure young people's holistic needs are met. This is confirmed by social workers and parents. The following comment was received from a social worker regarding a young person who used the service and then transferred to adult services: 'I have experienced a strong working together ethos from all the staff I have liaised with whilst being the social worker, and am aware there has been an equally strong working relationship with school and mum. (With staff going above and beyond in my view to support mum).'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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