

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	01/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC036726
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	Robin Taylor
Inspector	Judith Longden

Inspection date	01/09/2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC036726

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives because of living here or visiting for short breaks.
- Parents clearly identify the progress that their children make and acknowledge the excellent care provided and the support they receive from staff. One parent said: 'I feel very strongly that this is the right place for my child, and the care and attention that he receives can't be beaten. If I did not feel as secure, I could not relax whilst he was away and so the break would be counter-productive. Letting your child go to the care of others is never easy, and there are lots of guilt feelings and insecurities. This placement alleviates all of this for me.'
- Staff are thoroughly trained in all aspects of safeguarding and protecting young people who have learning disabilities. Excellent management of risk enables young people to enjoy a raft of new experiences.
- The staff team is a real strength of this home. Staff bring a variety of skills and qualities to the team and communicate extremely effectively with each other, with families and other professionals.
- The registered manager and his senior team bring a wealth of experience to the service. The registered manager clearly understands the strengths and areas of development required to continue to improve the service.
- One minor shortfall is noted in the updating of written care plans, although the electronic versions are well maintained.

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

Recommendations

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

- All children's case records must be kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. It provides a residential service for six young people, and a short-break service for six young people. All the young people have severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviours.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/11/2015	Full	Good
24/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/12/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
<p>Young people living in the residential home and those who visit for short breaks make excellent progress in all areas of their lives and enjoy a wealth of experiences and opportunities. Parents and social workers speak very highly of the provision and the excellent care provided by staff. One parent said, 'We are very lucky that we have this service. It is a brilliant setting, brilliant staff and good continuity of staff.'</p> <p>Achievements large and small are celebrated by a myriad of photographs, showing young people on activities, completing tasks, making choices and having fun. The use of a 'wow board' celebrates the special moments when a young person has done something, such as brushing their teeth properly or being kind to another young person. These 'wow' moments are captured on cards, displayed for a month and then kept in individual young people's scrapbooks, providing a lasting record of their achievements when residing here and serving as a boost to their confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Young people enjoy an extensive range of activities in and out of the home, in the local community and further afield. These include visits to theme parks, trips to the seaside, walks in the forest and attending a large national music festival. One parent, commenting on her son's visit to this festival, said, 'He got covered in mud and was grinning from ear to ear, just like any other teenager.' Many young people also enjoy holidays, some abroad, which not only provide exciting opportunities to visit foreign countries but also a range of experiences on various modes of transport. This broadens young people's horizons and provides them with opportunities that they might otherwise not be able to enjoy. Staff plan activities with the help of a resource file containing an extensive range of suggestions for places to visit and activities for young people to enjoy. Consideration is given to the staffing and mix of young people for each activity, ensuring an enjoyable experience for all. Community-based activities, such as the athletics club, provide opportunities for young people to form friendships outside of the home. Staff ensure that young people are active and taking appropriate exercise. For some, this has been of benefit, not just to their health but also for their education: sleeping better at night makes them more alert during the following school day.</p> <p>Communication between school, the home and families is excellent. The home and school diary provide information on the young person's progress and any issues arising during the school day. This helps staff to continue the learning in the setting and, likewise, families can focus on these areas when their child is at home. Staff advocate for young people, ensuring that the correct educational opportunities are available. For example, staff noted that a young person seemed</p>	

to have grown out of his school and required more stimulation. Successfully advocating for him has secured him a college placement. This commitment to education and learning helps young people to achieve their potential. Activities such as shopping, basic food preparation, cleaning and personal hygiene routines enable young people to learn practical skills as they transition into adulthood.

Staff clearly understand young people and the relationship between their health needs and behaviours. For example, during the inspection, staff recognised that a young person's particular activities and behaviours during the day indicated that a seizure might be pending. Careful monitoring and supervision, as well as excellent communication between the whole staff team, meant that they were fully prepared for the seizure that occurred that evening.

Staff medication practice is excellent. Robust recording ensures that the correct medication is administered at the correct time. Extensive audits by staff, shift leaders and managers ensure that administration and recording of medication is correct and that stocktaking is accurate. Staff recognise the impact of medication on behaviours such as self-harm and carefully monitor young people, alerting relevant health professionals to any changes in behaviour and ensuring that medication is correct, and consequently reducing such behaviours.

Staff are tenacious in their efforts to ensure that all young people are able to make choices about their day-to-day and future lives. They use a range of communication methods to engage young people in activities, such as going shopping, deciding how to decorate their rooms and choosing trips out. Key-work sessions are effectively used to carry out activities, helping young people to reach their targets. Numerous photographs and comments by staff and young people provide a lasting record of this progress. One parent commented: 'All of the staff are excellent at connecting with, and communicating with, the young people.' This extremely effective communication provides a solid foundation for the building of trusting relationships between staff and young people.

Staff also communicate extremely effectively with families, ensuring consistency in care and a joint approach to target setting. One parent summed up the excellent communication stating: 'The feedback is amazing, during and after his stay. Staff write consistently in his home and school book, and I speak to them every day he is on respite. I also have monthly chats with the key worker, who is brilliant at helping us all as a family, and we plan things for his subsequent visits. I feel very included in his care, which is reassuring for me.' Staff encourage families to visit and share activities and mealtimes with young people, helping staff to forge good relationships with them and enabling young people to build on their relationships with their family members.

The layout of the home encourages social interaction, providing plenty of space for group activities and an extensive garden with a range of play equipment. Young people have plenty of rooms that provide quieter, more reflective spaces. A parent commented: 'This is the place she loves to be most. She likes to be interacting. She needs constant stimulation and she gets it here, lots of different play areas and

spaces and so many different rooms. She does well and becomes more independent here because she can wander and choose activities because of the layout of the home.'

Transitions to new placements are extremely well planned with a range of pre-visits and overnight stays with staff, with family and eventually by themselves, ensuring that their moves are as smooth as possible.

Excellent communication between staff at shift handover and planning meetings ensures that they fully understand any concerns or issues as well as the routines and care plans for young people. A centralised computer system stores detailed care plans. These are regularly reviewed and updated, and provide staff with relevant information. A written version supplements this electronic version. This is not always kept up to date. Currently, the format of care plans and risk assessments is being reviewed. If both formats continue, staff should ensure that the written records are as up to date as the electronic version and clearly signed and dated. This will provide consistent information.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
<p>Young people are exceptionally safe here and in the community. This is because staff receive an excellent range of training in safeguarding issues, such as sexual exploitation, safeguarding young people who have learning disabilities, and understanding extremism. Training is provided through various means, including on-line courses and workbooks specific to the service. This means that staff can learn in a variety of ways and receive a broad spectrum of safeguarding information. Staff have the safety of young people always at the forefront of their work.</p> <p>Highly effective management of risk ensures that young people are safe while still enjoying a range of varied activities and experiences, giving them the freedom to develop as individuals.</p> <p>The use of physical intervention has reduced significantly. This is because staff develop approaches and strategies for interventions based on their growing knowledge and understanding of the individuals' needs. On the occasions when it is used, it is appropriate and for the immediate safety of the young person. Intervention records provide clarity about the reason for the hold and type of hold used. Reviews with those involved identify its effectiveness and provide learning for staff and young people.</p>	

There have been no incidents of absence or missing from this home. Detailed protocols and procedures provide a framework for staff to record and report any absences, and staff clearly understand the process to follow in the event of such an incident.

Bullying is not an issue. Staff understand young people's behaviours and the possible impact on others. They effectively monitor all situations, plan activities carefully and remain vigilant to observe any potential issues between young people.

Some young people have seizures. These are carefully monitored by staff who record details such as the date, time, recovery period, characteristics and medication. This helps parents to understand their child's seizures, and they are able to present this information to medical professionals at appointments, ensuring that up-to-date information is available to help their child.

Staff carefully monitor young people for any unexplained bruises or marks. Appropriate sharing of information across agencies and the family ensures that any concerns are investigated thoroughly and that young people are kept safe from harm.

Robust recruitment processes for new staff ensure that young people are not exposed to unsuitable people. Parent involvement in the interviews further strengthens this process.

The management of health and safety is excellent. Identified personnel lead this area of work, acting as a conduit of information for colleagues. Regular review of the premises and equipment ensures that any shortfalls are swiftly identified and reported. The home's maintenance person responds or escalates to specialists or contractors if required. Fire safety is of paramount importance. Regular fire drills for staff and young people ensure that everyone is aware of what to do in the event of a fire. Recently a fire door was damaged, and this has been reported for specialist repair. All staff have been made aware of the possible reduction in the door's capabilities. Contingency plans identify how to ensure that everyone remains safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager is well qualified and has a wealth of experience. He is ably supported by his senior staff, who bring a variety of skills and qualities to the management team. They are thoroughly involved in the day-to-day activities in the	

home and maintain very effective oversight and scrutiny. A member of staff commented: 'They get stuck in, really dig in to help out.'

The registered manager has produced an exceptionally detailed development plan for the coming year, with a real focus on the staff team. There is an element of 'back to basics', reinforcing the manager's expectation of staff, their attitude, conduct and understanding of their roles. The plan also focuses on the continued expansion of training opportunities for staff and on utilising these effectively to improve the quality of care for young people. Linked to this is a new, in-depth induction programme for new staff. This extensive programme utilises a number of methods, such as observations, written work, self-reflection and feedback to help new staff develop their understanding and skills. These two documents show the real thrust to improve and develop the already excellent staff team.

Staff morale is high, despite some ongoing concerns about the future of the provision. There is a real focus on 'getting on with it', ensuring that young people continue to benefit from an excellent service. Excellent teamwork is recognised by staff, placing authorities and parents. Staff move between residential and short-breaks services and are not fixed to one area. This means that they get to know all the young people and build good relationships with all their families.

Staff feel supported and valued through effective supervision, regular team meetings, and the provision of quality training. Staff bring their learning from training into the workplace to improve practice. For example, following training in resilience of young people, staff have introduced the 'wow boards' to celebrate achievements, boosting the self-esteem and confidence of young people. The manager is looking to progress this further to use with staff, recognising their achievements and helping them build resilience in a very demanding job.

A large number of staff work in the home, and all but two have completed the required level of qualification. The remaining two are currently on course to complete next year. This will ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified within the required timescales.

External monitoring is robust, with an independent person assessing the service on a monthly basis, ensuring that young people are well cared for, making progress and safe. Young people and their parents engage well with the visitor and are happy to share their views. Staff involve themselves in the monitoring visit, discussing with the visitor and reviewing the suggestions made. One member of staff said of the visitor, 'They ask the right questions.' Internal monitoring is equally robust, providing a detailed review of progress and highlighting any areas that need addressing.

Extensive refurbishment of the building and continued focus on the development of the staff team show a real investment in the service and a continued desire to provide the best quality of care for young people and a place where they can thrive as individuals.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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