

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC034900
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Nottingham City Council
Registered person address	Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG
Responsible individual	Kay Sutt
Registered manager	Joanne Wright Peter Corkhill
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>Although it is only three months since the last inspection, at which no requirements or recommendations were made, there is clear evidence that the managers and staff have continued to build on and develop the outstanding care and support that the children and young people using this service receive. One aspect of improvement is an enhanced focus on the quality and content of staff training. For example, there is a greater emphasis on research, as well as the use of external trainers, including parents, whose personal experiences are very powerful and pertinent to learning. Communication is also an area of improvement. Some staff have been trained in an advanced signing system and share their expertise with all staff, including ancillary staff, so that communication with children and young people is enhanced. Another area that has been further developed is the involvement of children and young people in staff recruitment interviews. The involvement of parents and carers has also increased and there is a recently developed parents' group to facilitate their contribution to the care and support that children and young people receive during their short breaks.</p> <p>The service places children and young people at its heart. The interior of the building reflects their activities, achievements and choices. For example, bedrooms are decorated in a very individual way, following the express wishes of the children and young people. Where possible, children and young people use their preferred bedrooms when they come for their short breaks. An outdoor sensory pod is under construction, following fundraising. This again reflects the interests of the children and young people who use the service and will provide really positive experiences once it is completed.</p> <p>Short breaks are very well planned. Consideration is given to friendship groups, as well as the needs and presentation of each child or young person, in order that they have the best time possible during their short breaks. When young people leave the service, staff ensure that this is well planned. Staff will visit potential placements with the young person and their parents, and they provide all the necessary information. Staff facilitate visits to the new placement and work with the new staff team, both in this home and the new home, to enable the new staff to get to know the young person and the strategies that work for them. Young</p>	

people are also prepared through the use of social stories, so that they have the best understanding possible of what to expect.

Staff are exceptionally committed to and passionate about the work they do to provide children and young people with experiences of the highest quality. They know the children and young people really well and have a comprehensive understanding of their needs. Children and young people have opportunities to have new and varied experiences. Staff are very keen for the children and young people to access the community and use the facilities there, such as the cinema or ice rink. One young person has been to Wembley three times to watch football matches and many have had holidays away from the home. One staff member said: 'We expand their interests. We want them to have fun, but we also provide challenge. We recognise their potential and look beyond and hold a mirror up to other professionals.'

Children and young people also make progress, despite the limited time they spend at this home. Each child or young person has a small number of targets; these are agreed with the child or young person and their parents and are carefully monitored. The monitoring of these targets is an area that has been improved since the last inspection, as the targets are now more specific and are more detailed about the progress that has been made. Breakfast meetings are used to discuss progress and make plans in order to achieve the best outcomes. This home also supports the families, providing a much-needed lifeline at times. One social worker said: 'Home life would have broken down if it was not for them (the staff).' Another social worker said: 'This home makes a difference to the young people, but also all the family members.'

Safeguarding of children and young people is well developed. All staff have specific training in safeguarding children and young people with disabilities, in recognition of their increased vulnerabilities. Staff have also undertaken training on radicalisation, including forced marriage and honour-based violence. Risk is well assessed and documented, with clear strategies to minimise the risks. However, staff are not risk averse, and children and young people continue to enjoy a number of activities safely. Behaviour is managed very well. A social worker commented on how calm staff are in the face of behaviour that provides many challenges. He said: 'They take everything in their stride, they are amazing. They manage those who have been unmanageable elsewhere.' Physical intervention and sanctions are rare. When these do occur, managerial monitoring and oversight are good and any lessons that can be learned are highlighted and implemented in practice.

Partnership working is excellent. Parents speak very highly of the service they receive, particularly the flexibility and responsiveness when there is a crisis. One parent referred to it as 'an invaluable service with amazing staff'. Another parent said: 'If there are any problems they sort it out straight away. We have a good relationship.' Key workers also provide outreach to families, to assist them when they are struggling with particular issues. A representative from one of the schools

said: 'We have a good relationship. They are very good at sharing information, attending meetings and providing reports. They always get back to us if we contact them.' Social workers are similarly positive and comment on how closely they and the staff work together. One social worker said: 'There is excellent communication, they are easy to work with and they are very accommodating.' The home also benefits from the services of an on-site nurse who provides bespoke training, undertakes health assessments and audits the medication. This highly effective partnership working ensures consistency of care and support to the children and young people, all of whom use a variety of services.

The home is outward looking and works effectively with other agencies to improve practice and services to the wider community. For example, it provided helpful advice and strategies to another local authority's children's home that was struggling with how to manage a particular young person. It has given a presentation to the police in relation to autism and Asperger syndrome. It is currently working with employers to encourage them to employ people who have autism. Although the children and young people who currently use the service may not benefit directly from this work, some may benefit in the future, either directly or indirectly, through the wider community having a better understanding of disabilities.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide short breaks for 11 children and young people who have learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
27/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
27/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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