

# SC036732

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## 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 who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

**Inspection dates:** 7 to 8 August 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**                      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 21 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children are having new and positive experiences during their stays. They take part in a variety of activities, both in the home and the community.
- Staff are able to assess risks effectively and provide appropriate strategies to minimise these risks. Children are safe because staff know them well and understand their vulnerabilities.
- Children receive good-quality support from a committed staff team. Staff are confident in supporting children with complex needs, communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour.
- The management team works hard to raise standards and provides a service that is tailored to each child. It understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a clear development plan to achieve continual improvement.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Despite the efforts of managers, one child's shared care arrangements mean a lack of continuity of care due to frequent moves between placements.
- When children have underlying health conditions, medical advice is not always sought to confirm whether use of physical intervention is appropriate.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/01/2016	Full	Good

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (2) (b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that medical advice is sought to inform practice when a child has an underlying health condition.</p>	01/09/2017
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14 (1))</p>	01/09/2017

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a range of new experiences during their stays at the home. They take full advantage of the expansive garden, which is filled with swings, a slide and other apparatus to have fun on. Since the last inspection, a sensory garden has been developed. Children enjoy spending time in this quieter area of the garden. This resource helps children to be active and healthy. A carer said, ‘He loves the garden. He runs off lots of energy there.’ Children also spend time away from the home, there have been recent trips to a local farm and a restaurant. As a result, children grow in confidence and feel more comfortable in the community.

When new children start their stays at the home, they benefit from a well-planned transition. Importantly, this is taken at the child’s own pace. Staff take time to get to know the child through a visit to school, as well as to their parents or carers at home.

Most children return home to their parent's care at the end of their stays. For those children staying longer, regular contact with parents or carers, which takes place in the home or community, is encouraged. Parents confirm that they are made to feel welcome. When children arrive for their stay, they are greeted warmly. Activities are available for them such as arts and crafts or 'messy play'. Children enjoy watching videos through computer tablets or listening to music. They settle in quickly, demonstrating that they are comfortable in their surroundings.

Each child's stay is well planned. Managers do all that they can to be flexible about when children have their short breaks, but also ensure that children are safely matched and enjoy each other's company. Care planning is individualised. Different communication styles are used effectively to help children understand their daily routines. These methods help children to communicate their wishes and feelings as well as easing any frustration that may lead to difficult behaviour. Children are consulted on their views and options throughout their stays. There is also the opportunity to be involved in young people's meetings. Recently, a meeting gathered ideas about what the children would like to do over the summer holiday period. Some of these ideas have been incorporated into different trips out, such as a trip on a boat specifically designed to be accessible for disabled people. Children are given experiences that they may not ordinarily have.

Some children have regular visits for overnight breaks. Others visit for day care. The home can also accommodate children for longer periods as an emergency placement. Staff offer direct support to families in their own homes. This flexibility enables children and families to receive a high level of support to meet their individual needs. One young person's care is currently shared between another children's home run by the local authority and their parents. This arrangement has been ongoing for several months. There is no regular pattern to the child's stays in these three different places. This means that she can have several moves in a week. Although the management team has pressed the local authority for a resolution, this current arrangement does not create continuity of care for the child.

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

High levels of supervision, by staff who are familiar with children's individual needs, help to ensure that children are not at risk in the home or the community. Supervision levels also ensure that children do not go missing. Staff have warm and trusting relationships with children, which enable children to feel safe and secure.

Children benefit from clear routines and effective use of behaviour management techniques. Challenging and complex behaviours are well understood and managed. Staff know the children well and understand their vulnerabilities and complex needs. This enables them to make comprehensive risk assessments that inform positive strategies to minimise these risks. Staff are good at de-escalating challenging behaviour to ensure children's safety. There are relatively low levels of physical intervention. However, where a child has an underlying health condition which could be exacerbated by the use of physical intervention, medical advice has not always been sought. This means that staff do not have the correct information to make an assessment of risk should they need to

use physical intervention.

Incidents are well recorded. Since the last inspection, a staff member sustained an injury caused by a child. Risk assessments were quickly updated and changes to care practice mean that the home can continue to care for the child safely. All incidents are examined by the manager to ensure that practice remains effective and to consider whether lessons can be learned.

Staff demonstrate a clear knowledge of safeguarding processes and whistleblowing procedures. This helps to ensure that children remain safe while staying at the home. Appropriate recruitment procedures help to ensure, as far as can be ascertained, that children are cared for by safe and suitable people. Health and safety procedures, such as regular testing of the fire alert system, help to ensure that the home is safe.

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted for several years. She is experienced and runs an effective and high-quality service. The management team is aware of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. It also has an up-to-date understanding of children's progress, through management monitoring systems, which include case discussions with key staff. The home's development plan is designed to further improve the quality of care and experiences of children. The new sensory garden is an example of this continual improvement.

There is a committed and experienced staff team. Relief or agency workers are used on occasion to supplement the number of staff on duty, especially during busier periods such as school holidays. The manager aims to use the same workers to aid consistency for children. The staff team is well supported by the managers through supervision. The staff have regular team meetings where children's presenting needs are discussed. The staff team members report feeling a sense of low morale currently, due to some proposed changes in their hours. The manager is sensitive to this and both sides are negotiating to ensure a swift conclusion. Importantly, there has been no impact on children's experiences as a result of this consultation process.

The staff and managers work well with a wide range of multi-agency partners. This ensures that each child has access to all the services that they need. In general, relationships and communications with parents are positive. Parents and carers have positive views about the impact of the care that their children receive.

Staff have either gained or are in the process of undertaking the required qualification in residential childcare. Staff benefit from access to a variety of learning experiences. These include mandatory as well as specialist training courses tailored to the needs of children. This enhances their knowledge, skills and understanding of their role.

## **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:** SC036732

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

**Registered Provider:** Nottinghamshire County Council

**Registered provider address:** Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall,  
Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

**Responsible individual:** Vonny Senogles

**Registered manager:** Lynda Rhodes

## Inspector(s)

Catherine Honey: social care inspector

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