

# SC034210

Registered provider: North Yorkshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority, and provides care and accommodation for up to nine children or young people who have sensory impairment, physical and/or learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders.

All placements are made under the short-breaks arrangements and/or may also constitute an extended, bespoke, shared-care plan with the child or young adult's family/carers. This enables them to remain within their family/carer's home and attend their local school.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 August 2017

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|---|--------------------|

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|---|-------------|

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|---|-------------|

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 March 2017

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

## Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The highly skilled and experienced staff team provides children and young people with a variety of new social, educational and recreational opportunities.
- Staff provide excellent nurturing and consistent care, and know each child and young person exceptionally well.
- Children and young people make progress in different aspects of their lives with individual goals mapped on easy-to-read, creative pictorial plans.
- There are many different types of sensory stimulation for children and young people in order to heighten their senses.
- The home displays, and staff use, appropriate and relevant communication techniques to meet children's individual needs.
- Staff act as positive role models and give children and young people opportunities to meet others such as athletes with disabilities, to provide inspiration.
- Excellent risk management results in children and young people being kept safe while enjoying a range of new activities and adventures.
- Partnership working with health professionals ensures that the staff are competent to meet the complex medical needs of children and young people.
- The manager is inspirational and child focused, providing new opportunities and experiences for children and young people.
- The staff team collaboratively provides an exceptional short-breaks service, with excellent relationships developed with carers and other professionals.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 02/03/2017      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 20/09/2016      | Full            | Good                   |
| 29/03/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 19/08/2015      | Full            | Requires improvement   |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children and young people experience a well-planned and personalised introduction to this short-breaks provision, which operates over two highly child-focused homes. Young people were involved in making a digital children's guide to show children and young people new to the home and their carers what facilities are available. This helps to allay any fears or anxieties that children and young people or their carers have. One parent said: 'When [Name of young person] was referred to the home, the way staff went about it, he was assimilated as easily and as effectively as possible. Staff are an example of all that is best.'

Staff offer children and young people, some of whom have highly complex medical needs, the chance to enjoy a variety of exciting and new social, educational and recreational adventures. The recently donated minibus enhances these experiences, allowing children and young people to go out together on trips. Children and young people participate in community events, with some recently attending a local disco. Staff use opportunities to include children's and young people's friends and siblings by holding large social events at the home, such as a summer barbecue. A holiday club started this year also includes children and young people who do not currently use the short-breaks service. This introduces them to the home. Children and young people have the chance to socialise and have fun with their peers. This helps friendships develop and young people improve their social skills.

The staff's exceptional nurturing and consistent care add considerably to children's and young people's enjoyment, progress and development. The welcoming and friendly staff team enjoys supporting and sharing experiences with children and young people. Consequently, this promotes the development of positive, trusting relationships. Children and young people feel safe and confident enough to try new things, such as learning how to manage a noisy or busy environment. This enhances their lives, as they have opportunities to visit new places and engage in activities such as trampolining and swimming.

Staff give gentle encouragement and this helps children and young people make progress in different areas of their lives. Staff creatively design individualised, pictorial development plans to help children and young people understand their targets. Informative, individual strategies help staff understand how best to support children and young people to achieve their potential. This offers a high level of continuity, which is important for those children and young people who need clear routines. Young people develop independence skills that are compatible with their age and ability. Staff embrace and celebrate children's and young people's achievements. Children are very proud of their success, with one young person keen to show his photograph on the 'My Achievements' display. As a result, small and realistic attainments lead to improved self-esteem and confidence.

Children and young people receive an abundance of sensory and other positive stimulation that significantly improves their life experiences. This includes the award-winning sensory garden, sensory stories and a 'Sensology Workout' to stimulate and heighten children's and young people's senses. Staff are highly experienced and use a multitude of communication techniques. The staff team's excellent relationship with school staff ensures that there is ongoing dialogue about each child's and young person's communication needs. This provides a consistent approach across different settings, aiding development. Children's and young people's requests are displayed on a 'You said, we did' display board. Children and young people are actively encouraged to feel that this is their home and shape the service they receive. One young person who has no verbal communication expressed to staff her wish to have her short breaks more spaced out. Staff advocated on her behalf and relayed her views to her carers and the placing authority.

Children and young people learn well about other cultures, including looking at different countries. Staff also celebrate children's and young people's special interests, which are displayed on a 'Celebration of Me' notice board. Children and young people also tell their peers about their interests and hobbies. This boosts confidence and helps children and young people become more tolerant and understanding of each other's abilities. Children and young people are introduced to positive role models; this has included them meeting a well-known disabled actor at a red carpet award ceremony.

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

Vulnerable children and young people receive a high level of support during their short-break stays, keeping them safe and protected. Staff have an extensive knowledge of every child's and young person's complex physical, health and behavioural needs. This offers reassurance to families and carers that their children are cared for and protected. A social worker said: 'Having shown parents around, any fears have been allayed when they see the place and that staff are very competent, even with high-needs young people.'

Risk management is exceptional, with children's and young people's vulnerabilities fully assessed and reviewed. Managers produce very specific and individualised risk assessments relating to children's and young people's care. In some cases, for additional clarity, this includes photographs of the position in which a child should be fed or how they should sleep. Staff effectively follow this vital information.

Children and young people benefit from a range of new experiences through participating in community visits and external activities. These are carefully risk assessed for each child or young person to make sure it is safe for them to take part. Staff are ambitious and recently took eight young people for an overnight weekend break to London. Young people really enjoyed travelling by train and sightseeing and attended the Para athletics. Feedback from carers includes: 'Staff are very methodical. The way the trip was planned and executed was excellent, down to the fine timings'; and, 'Going to

such an event as the athletics is a once in a lifetime experience.'

When physical restraint or intervention is required to keep a child or young person safe, staff use appropriate and recognised holding techniques in line with safety plans. Staff's recording of the incident is clear and detailed and they are honest and transparent about their practice. They reflect on the impact of such incidents on other young people and actions that could prevent reoccurrences. Staff are imaginative in finding ways to help children and young people recognise and communicate their distress. This has led to one young person indicating when he is struggling with loud and busy environments. He has gained some control over his life, which leads to less negative behaviour. As a result, physical intervention is low.

Some young people are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. As a result, staff remain highly vigilant when children and young people use their computers and access the internet. Staff take every opportunity to educate young people about the dangers associated with using the internet to help keep them safe when using social media.

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

The manager has worked at the home for many years in senior management roles. She has extensive experience of working with children and young people who have physical and learning disabilities, and complex needs. The manager was registered in May 2016, and has the appropriate leadership qualifications to manage the home. In the manager's absence, the two deputy managers support and promote the seamless running of the home effectively. There is a collaborative approach taken by the whole staff team to make it an excellent short-breaks service.

The child-focused manager is highly aspirational for children and young people. She has made many positive changes and improvements since her appointment as manager. This includes meeting the requirement from the last inspection. She is motivated to succeed and leads by example; this filters down to all of the staff, who are committed and passionate. The manager was instrumental in making the London trip possible. A social worker said: 'The service is the best it's ever been. The relationship is the best it has ever been. It is in a good place now and parents are positive about the care.'

The management team successfully monitors the care given to children and young people using effective systems that enable good oversight. This includes holding case-management meetings between the key workers and their manager. This helps with the continuity of care and ensures that staff are completing their tasks in a timely way.

The manager has good oversight of the staff's training through their individual learning and development records. They benefit from a comprehensive training package. Staff complete a detailed, reflective competency workbook and the management team carries out observations of practice. The team has excellent partnership working with health professionals who complete competency testing to provide independent scrutiny of the staff's skills. This ensures that they are highly skilled in using the specific equipment that

is vital to children's and young people's quality of life. The management team has introduced a reflective journal in which staff can record and explore their working practice on a day-to-day basis. Regular supervisions and team meetings inspire frank and honest discussions. External speakers and training scenarios promote discussions and create opportunities for reflective practice. Consequently, staff are instrumental in improving practice.

The staff have developed excellent working relationships with professionals such as teachers, paediatricians, occupational therapists and school nurses. This supports a multi-agency approach to children's and young people's care. Families and carers are passionate about the service the home provides, and help with fundraising to enhance and develop the home and garden. In return, families and carers speak of benefiting from the staff's support to access services or challenge when these are not provided. A child's carer said: 'Staff are like a second family. The relationship we have with staff is exemplary and how relationships should be from a caring organisation.'

## **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:** SC034210

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

**Registered provider address:** North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall,  
Northallerton DL7 8AD

**Responsible individual:** Karl Podmore

**Registered manager:** Katherine Clarke

## Inspector

Tina Ruffles: social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017