

# SC046524

Registered provider: Sheffield City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to eight young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides for up to four young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and for four young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

**Inspection dates:** 3 to 4 October 2017

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

Outcomes in education and related learning activities **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:** 13 September 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The consistent implementation of a corporate parenting ethos provides the young people with a sense of warmth and belonging.
- The inspirational and efficient registered manager leads a skilled, motivated and nurturing staff team.
- The young people make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives, which promotes their life and career opportunities.
- Excellent partnership working between education and care staff helps to deliver positive learning outcomes for all young people.
- Young people feel safe and are helped to stay safe as a result of consistent delivery of outstanding individual behaviour management plans.
- Exceptional equality and diversity plans ensure that all of the young people's individual needs are known and met.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager has not yet completed required qualifications.
- The arrival area and some of the lounges require improvement to make them more homely.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2016	Full	Good
02/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/10/2015	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

## 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
Ensure that by the relevant date, the registered manager has attained the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England); or a qualification which the registered provider considers to be equivalent to the Level 5 Diploma. (Regulation 28 (2)(c))	10/02/2018

### Recommendations

- Children’s homes must comply with all relevant health and safety legislation; however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than an ‘institutional’ impression. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

In particular, when recruiting new education staff and implementing other planned changes in education, ensure that the home can continue to meet the educational and support needs of all the young people.

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

In particular, with the support of the local authority’s Children, Young People and Family Services, review arrangements with placing local authorities to ensure that they meet their obligations to provide young people’s education records to the home and that pupil-premium funding entitlement is provided in a timely manner.

### Inspection judgements

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

The home has an excellent record in achieving consistently positive outcomes for young people with complex and challenging needs, who have histories of rejecting authority, placing themselves at risk, and criminal and anti-social behaviour.

Development and additions to the building are on-going, which will improve facilities in and increase the capacity from eight to ten. A rolling programme of refurbishment is underway, which has improved some areas. The overall standard of repair, décor, fixtures, fittings equipment and furnishings is good. However, some areas are not as inviting and homely as they could be for young people; particularly the admission area.

The manager and staff pride themselves in acting as corporate parents. This is reflected in the way they view and work with the young people. Collectively, staff are committed to the homes' ethos and culture, which promotes the rights of the young people in an environment that is non-judgemental and where aspirations for young people are high.

This is a home that is completely child-centred, operating with the sole intention of improving the young people's outcomes. Working practices and daily routines are structured, yet ensure the diverse and individual needs of the young people are met. This success is because all tiers of staff are prepared to go the extra mile. A youth offending officer, when discussing staff stated, 'Their level of aspirations for young people is remarkable. Their high expectations makes such a difference to the positive outcomes achieved.'

The daily experiences the young people have, coupled with the continuity of high quality care, contributes significantly to the progress they make. The young people acknowledge this with one stating, 'Staff do things for you when they don't have to; like taking me on mobility when they were supposed to be off. I get on with all of them, but some are just out of this world. I owe them a lot.' Another young person said, 'This is a great place to live. I like living here.'

The home is proficient in identifying the needs of the young people. This is achieved through a variety of assessments undertaken shortly after admission by a multi-agency team who work well together. High quality planning documents, risk assessments and strategies are then designed to address individual need. The plans created inform all staff about the areas that need addressing through direct work packages. Inspectors viewed some outstanding areas of work currently being undertaken, including dealing with harmful sexual behaviour, offending, identity and gang culture.

Creating and maintaining meaningful and trusting relationships with the young people is an area staff are skilled in. Relationships are strong enough to withstand the most testing of times, due in part to the staff's non-judgemental approach, genuine compassion and their deep desire and commitment to get the best outcomes for the young people.

Inspectors randomly selected and tracked a number of young people. In all cases,

significant progress was seen. For example, in one case, a young person who was initially uncooperative, anti-authoritarian, heavily into gang culture, crime and drugs, has developed improved confidence and self-esteem and rejected their previous lifestyle. Progress for others can be slower, but just as impressive when considering their starting points.

Communication levels between the young people and staff are excellent; a reflection of the strong and trusting relationships. Consultation levels are high and the young people have an important part to play in the way the home operates. For example, they have a pivotal role in recruiting new staff. Various forums exist where the young people's opinions are sought and acted upon and they are able to openly share their views. This inclusivity gives the young people a feeling of worth and shows them that their opinions do matter.

The role of the independent advocate in the home is well-established. The young people are able to regularly meet with an advocate who promotes their rights. For example, the advocate currently attends formal review meetings and represented the views of one young person who is experiencing difficulty in attending the meetings. The advocate also helps to deal effectively with issues of concern that have been raised by the young people, negating the need for formal complaint.

There are outstanding arrangements and resources that meet young people's physical, mental, emotional and psychological needs. Young people have access to a range of health professionals who work with them. The practitioners providing these services are seen and accepted as part of the staff team. They are committed to the team approach adopted by the home. There are plans to further develop and increase the resources available to young people in the near future.

The promotion of health remains strong with a range of initiatives in place to encourage young people to adopt a healthier lifestyle; such as programmes for weight loss, improved nutrition and the promotion of exercise. Young people have direct access to professionals who advise and work with them on areas such as sexual health, illicit drugs and the effects of tobacco and alcohol.

Activity and enrichment periods are well-planned and implemented. These are designed to meet the ever changing needs of the group. Staff and the young people all get involved. During the inspection, inspectors had the pleasure of attending a musical event that had been arranged for some time. The event included the young people and staff performing music and songs together. One young person ran a café to provide refreshments. The high quality relationships between staff and the young people were evident during this event, with everyone joining in and enjoying each other's company.

Planning and implementing transition and mobility [planned and approved visits into the community] is a real area of strength. The home plans and advocates strongly for what is best for a young person when they are ready to move on. For example, the home is commended for their perseverance in planning and coordinating the transition plans for one young person. The planning and arrangements commenced last year, with the

transition due to take place shortly. The plans have required a number of agencies to fully commit to a package that reflects the unique and complex needs of the young person concerned. Professionals in all agencies have facilitated the transition, which has included staff from the new placement visiting and working with the young person and alongside the staff team in the home. The package is an outstanding example of a determined and coordinated approach to meet the needs of a young person.

The home constantly reviews and critically analyses practices in its continued quest for improvement. The young people's prospects for the future improve significantly due to the time they spend in the home. Their experience can be life-changing. An ex-resident visiting the home summed this up when telling an inspector, 'If I had not come here, I hate to think where I would have ended up. It could be prison or be dead.'

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

The upmost priority is given to the young people's protection. The young people are supported to be safe and feel safe. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of each young person's safety needs. This is gained through experience, training and exceedingly strong leadership, guidance and oversight.

Young people's vulnerabilities are assessed upon admission and reviewed regularly and thoroughly throughout their stay. The staff meet the individual needs of young people protecting them from harm exceptionally well. There is a consistent nurturing approach with clear rules and structured boundaries. The frequent and detailed communication processes ensure that staff understand and implement the young people's individual behaviour plans and risk strategies. This ensures that the young people feel well cared for and feel exceedingly safe. This excellent practice allows the young people to build strong trusting relationships with staff. As a result, the young people listen to the support, advice and guidance given. This makes a significant difference to the young people, who respond positively due to having a strong sense of safety and well-being. This enables them to manage their emotions and presenting behaviours better, after a difficult start in life.

A proactive management approach and on-going analysis of incidents, assists manages and staff to unravel the cause for the presenting negative behaviour of young people; charting patterns and promptly and collaboratively identifying child-focused solutions with the on-site health team. This ensures that the young people benefit from the successful implementation of unique and creative individual behaviour management strategies. For example, the analysis undertaken has identified that a young person's incidents increased later in the evening. This related to the young person being overtired. Supporting the young person with an earlier bedtime, following a positive night routine and settling them with bedtime reading, has resulted in the reduction of incidents and the duration and number of physical restraints required over a sustained period.

The young people benefit significantly from a restorative practice approach to address

poor behaviour. This minimises the use of sanctions. Young people are encouraged to read and comment on records of incidents. This helps them to discuss and understand why any measures of control have been imposed. There is a strong emphasis on supporting young people to resolve their differences with others through discussion. This promotes and develops the young people's communication skills in addressing conflict in a more positive way. Young people respond well to the constant nurturing environment where praise and rewards are focussed on the recognition of their achievements.

Physical restraint, if required, is used in line with regulations. Excellent records are kept of the incidents of physical restraint. The robust monitoring undertaken of the use of physical restraint includes the analysis of each incident to identify any need to improve or change practice. Additionally, there is routine external scrutiny of practices undertaken by a trained representative from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The representative said, 'The management team and staff are open and transparent about their practice and are receptive to learning. My view is this is an outstanding home.'

The use of single separation and managing away practices reflect the home's procedures and regulations. The young people have a specific plan when they require a period of being managed away from their peers to maintain their or others safety. The management team vigilantly consider and review the use of such measures. A staff member said, 'It is always our aim to get young people back into their ordinary routines and activities at the earliest opportunity when they have been put on a managing away plan or placed in single separation.'

The management team act swiftly, in line with relevant procedures, to notify all relevant parties when there are any allegations of poor practice or abuse. Immediate and on-going support and protection is provided to the young people. There has been one referral to the local authority since the last inspection. The designated officer in the local authority stated, 'Appropriate referrals and calls for advice from the manager and senior team are made. There is a culture of being open and transparent.'

The young people live within a very safe environment, where fire, health and safety audits and security checks are routinely undertaken. The staff carry out searches of the environment and young people in line with procedures, in order to promote safety and security. All matters are recorded as required. Staff are equipped to ensure safe practices are maintained through training in areas such as security procedures, fire, first-aid, the administration of medication, child protection and behaviour management.

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

The manager promotes a consistent, warm ethos of corporate parenting and leads a skilled, enthusiastic and nurturing management team. They are excellent role models for both staff members and the young people. The manager has yet to complete the Level 5 qualification or equivalent that is required for his role, but this does not have any negative impact on his leadership or the care and protection of the young people. A senior staff member said, '[Name] is the best manager I've ever worked for. He is

knowledgeable and totally committed to making sure the outcomes for the children are the best they can ever be. He makes sure that we all remember that we are corporate parents and we do for them what we would do for our own kids. He motivates staff and they see him doing everything he can and that inspires them to do the same.'

The one recommendation raised at the last inspection, has been met, which demonstrates the home's capacity to improve. This continued commitment to children's council meetings provides young people with further opportunities to share their wishes and feelings and gain important social and life skills.

The management team strive to ensure that the young people receive exceptional care. Their efficient attention to detail ensures that all the young people consistently receive care to the highest standard in collaboration with partner agencies. They use their knowledge of the young people, and the circumstances that led to them being placed in secure accommodation, to tailor specific responses. For example, the manager is involved with a community group that addresses 'gang mapping' to identify specific techniques to address need. When asked for their views of the managers, a young person said, 'I can't fault them.'

The recent introduction of weekly progress reports for each of the young people allows the manager to maintain a consistent overview of the progress made. He spends an appropriate portion of his work time working with staff and the young people, which enables him to build important relationships and observe young people's progress first-hand. This allows for the immediate recognition of any areas where the young people are struggling, or they are not fully able to engage and enables the swift implementation of alternative plans. The manager said, 'I am very proud of the nurturing relationships we have with the kids. We are a tactile home and we will hug the kids and ruffle their hair. We will give them that mum and dad relationship. What we do is show them appropriate touch, if they never learn appropriate they will never be able to recognise what is inappropriate.'

Excellent recruitment procedures are effectively applied and include the involvement of the young people in the interviewing processes. This ensures that a staff team of the highest calibre are appointed, who understand the young people and can communicate effectively with them. The well-motivated, nurturing and enthusiastic staff team report positively about the support they receive from their managers. The consistent message of corporate parenting and modelling caring behaviours empowers staff members to demonstrate care and warmth to the young people, which enriches their lives. A staff member said, 'It's a family; we are parents and we do it together. The most important thing to us is our young people. We do go above and beyond in everything we do and the dedication from some of our colleagues is exceptional.'

The young people are cared for by a staff team who are fully trained to meet their needs. A comprehensive core training programme includes subjects such as; physical intervention, first-aid, safeguarding and child protection. In addition, the proactive engagement with external agencies ensures that staff understand the risks posed by child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, as well as attachment issues. This increased



knowledge empowers the staff team to understand why the young people may behave in the way that they do and they then implement excellent care and behaviour management plans. A staff member said, 'We have a very high standard that we are constantly setting ourselves. We get so far and think what more can we do now. We are all modelling it to each other.'

Excellent supervision and appraisal sessions ensure that the staff team are not only fully supported, but that their professional practice is reviewed regularly. Staff report that they feel valued and that their expertise and knowledge is put to good use to enhance young people's care.

Regular team meetings, including the consistent use of case discussions, ensure that staff are kept informed and have a thorough understanding of each young person. This effectively contributes towards the outstanding care outcomes. This is further enhanced by the innovative practice of enabling a young person to lead and present his issues to the staff team, with the support of his mental health worker. A staff member said, 'A lot of the projects we have worked on and the developments we've made has come from staff. We have been listened to by our management working with us, how we can do it better and make things better. I definitely feel valued.'

Internal auditing processes inform the home's detailed development plan and ensures that care remains at a high standard. External reports produced by the Regulation 44 visitor are thorough and contribute towards young people's safety and well-being.

The home's statement of purpose states that, 'pro-social modelling is central to the corporate parenting model at [Home's name]. This is reflected in the individual behaviour management programme and equality and diversity plans.' The management team's exceptional practice and role-modelling for staff, ensures the delivery of excellent practice with the young people enabling young people to thrive.

The manager ensures that he and the staff team have excellent working relationships with partner agencies. This allows him to effectively challenge placing authorities when they are not seen to be meeting their responsibilities to young people. As a result of excellent collaborative working, innovative care and transition packages are developed which fully benefit young people. This enhances the quality of their future life opportunities. A senior manager from a private provider said, 'I have to say that the way the home have worked with us has been really impressive.'

The outstanding practice of introducing equality and diversity plans and ensuring that equality and diversity is discussed with staff members in each of their supervision sessions, ensures that the topic is kept live. As a result, every individual in the home can be confident that all of their unique needs are met. This instils a feeling of belonging and security allowing all to take pride in their heritage and individuality.

### **Outcomes in education and related learning activities: outstanding**

As a result of very effective links between the education team and care staff, the

importance of education has a very high profile in the home. Leaders and staff act as exemplary role models for the young people and consistently reinforce high expectations. The young people respond to this well. The young people achieve very well across a good range of qualifications including GCSEs. They make at least good and often outstanding progress compared to their very varied starting points and emotional and behavioural circumstances.

The head of learning strives to obtain detailed information about the young people's prior educational achievements and additional support needs. Although she obtains this very promptly for young people from the home's local area, there continues to be variability in responses from other placing local authorities.

Education staff take quick and effective action to identify the starting points and additional support needs for all the young people. However, the pupil premium funding that a few young people are entitled to, is not always readily available.

Teachers use the outcomes of the young people's accurate initial assessments very effectively to plan highly individualised learning programmes and support arrangements that challenge the young people to improve their skills, knowledge and behaviours. As a result of this, the young people quickly improve their subject knowledge and skills across a range of subjects and particularly in mathematics, English and science.

All education staff have a very good awareness of the young people's varied and often complex needs and circumstances. They place a strong emphasis on emotional, personal and social development. As a result, the young people's self-esteem and confidence improves and they become more independent and well-prepared for their next steps. One young person, who has left the home in the last year, successfully used the qualifications she had achieved to gain a place on a course at a further education college and another is planning to apply for an apprenticeship in forestry.

There are many strengths in the quality of teaching. Teachers plan lessons in detail to meet the varied abilities and ages of the young people. Their planning includes appropriate consideration about potential contingencies or adaptations to activities which they may need to implement if disruptions occur. Learning support assistants and the learning coordinator, who assist in lessons, have a detailed understanding about how their planned input will support the young people.

Staff respond very well to the young people who display challenging behaviours. They are very skilled at taking appropriate action to calm the young people down when they become agitated and threaten to disrupt their own learning and that of their peers. On the few occasions where further action is required with individual young people, the education team work very flexibly to support each other to deal with the situation, adapt activities and ensure that the learning of other young people is not unduly disrupted.

Teachers use an extensive range of resources, including laptops and electronic tablets, to make learning interesting for the young people. This enables them to carry out research and to produce high quality presentations. Teachers reinforce very effectively

the importance to the young people of developing good English and mathematics skills through all learning activities. All education staff challenge and support the young people particularly well to produce high quality course work in all the subjects they take. Teachers provide the young people with detailed feedback on work they have completed which includes both motivational praise, and guidance about how they can improve their work. Teachers undertake regular reviews of the young people's progress and provide high levels of detail about their achievements to care staff within the home and where possible, to parents. They involve care staff and parents well when planning the next steps in education with the young people.

Attendance to education is good. When young people experience health related or personal issues preventing their attendance, education staff put effective alternative arrangements in place with care staff. The start of lessons can be occasionally delayed. However, staff manage planned separations of individual young people, or if they need to calm the young people down if there have been any incidents in the time leading up to the morning or afternoon education sessions starting.

The head of learning, teachers and the learning coordinator, plan and implement a very comprehensive range of enrichment and group activities that the young people thoroughly enjoy. Through these well-planned activities, the young people improve considerably their understanding about a range of health and well-being issues and how to recognise and protect themselves from abuse, grooming, bullying and radicalisation. The young people also learn about the benefits of staying physically fit and healthy through physical education lessons. Care and education staff now work very effectively together to provide an after-education programme that engages the young people in further learning and social activities. During these, and at the weekly assembly on Friday afternoons, the young people's achievements are widely celebrated.

Teachers introduce a range of activities in lessons that very effectively challenge young people to consider social and ethical issues and how this relates to them in today's society. One young person described and evaluated in detail the different views that people in Britain have about immigration to the country. One young person demonstrated a good understanding about the circumstances that have led to American footballer players 'taking the knee' during the playing of the USA national anthem and how their actions have divided public opinion. Another young person is preparing a presentation about the different opinions held by people in British society about whether sports events where animals can be injured or killed, such as the Grand National, should be banned.

Leaders and managers, including members of the advisory board, are ambitious for what the young people can achieve through education. Leaders have successfully developed a curriculum that meets the young people's varied needs and interests very well. The young people experience a curriculum which combines core provision of English, mathematics and science with a broad range of other relevant learning activities. The head of learning regularly evaluates the effectiveness and impact of the education provision and uses her accurate observations to plan staff training and to implement improvements and developments to both the deployment of the teaching team and the

education curriculum. Recent developments to the curriculum include the introduction of a science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) strand and a plan to move functional skills accreditation to an awarding body that provides on-demand testing. This is intended to better align formative testing in mathematics, English and information communication technologies (ICT) to the young people's individual progress, circumstances and length of stay at the home.

Supplementing the education curriculum young people can engage in a wide range of personal effectiveness courses and enrichment activities including; basic cooking, art, resistant materials and music. The completion of the music studio since the previous inspection has provided an outstanding bespoke facility. A specialist music teacher who visits the education provision every week enables the young people to practice playing a variety of instruments. Young people thoroughly enjoy performing songs and music pieces to their peers and staff at celebration events.

Governance of the education provision is highly effective. The advisory board, chaired by the Local Children, Young People and Family services head of inclusion, includes elected members and education specialists. They use their wide and varied range of skills and experience well to provide effective support and challenge to the registered manager and head of learning. The head of learning provides detailed reports to the advisory board who scrutinise and challenge performance effectively. Board members are very clear that their role goes beyond simply ensuring that the young people participate in education; they set high expectations and focus in detail on the progress the young people make and the outcomes they achieve. Leaders have taken effective action to implement the recommendations made at the previous inspection and to continue to improve the quality of provision.

The head of learning leads by example and has taken very effective steps to ensure that staff work well as a team to meet the varied education and support needs of the young people. To sustain the quality of provision she has recognised the need for, and has established plans with the registered manager and the advisory board, to implement further changes. One priority is to recruit a suitable teacher to the remaining permanent vacancy, currently covered by agency staff. A longer term priority that leaders are very mindful of is the need to ensure that the staff team has the necessary skills and capacity to continue to provide high quality education to all the young people when the number of places increases from eight to ten. The head of learning is also cognisant of the fact that these additional places will cater for young people with complex needs. Leaders are very aware that implementing any change will involve risk as the quality of education depends on the professionalism and dedication of a small team of staff.

## **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:** SC046524

**Provision sub-type:** Secure Unit

**Registered provider address:** Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH

**Responsible individual:** Dorne Collinson

**Registered manager:** Kieran Hill

## Inspector(s)

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Malcolm Fraser, education HMI

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