

SC062309

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for six children who may have physical and/or learning disabilities. The registration is for two children under a short-break arrangement, and for four to live permanently at the home. The home is part of a private organisation.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 November 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**

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: 1 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:

- Children with very complex healthcare needs and disabilities receive highly individualised care from a competent and very well-trained staff team.
- Transition planning is extremely comprehensive and highly child centred. Leaders and staff work very closely with families and other services to provide cohesive plans that have resulted in outstanding outcomes for children.
- Children are exceeding expectations in educational settings due to the high level of commitment and support provided by staff who have worked extremely hard to address any barriers to inclusion.
- Healthcare planning is collaborative, highly detailed and informed by research-based principles. It promotes enhanced life chances for children.
- Children are able to access a wide range of carefully planned social opportunities and activities which broaden their experiences and enhance their emotional well-being.
- Leaders are inspiring, and have high aspirations for all the children in their care.
- The registered manager carries out frequent and highly evaluative internal and external monitoring to ensure that practice in the home evolves positively and continuously.
- Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective and children are supported to become increasingly safe, inside and out of the home.
- Placing authorities, partners and families are highly complimentary about all aspects of the service provided by this setting.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The team is totally comprised of female members of staff. Leaders should aim to provide children with male staff role models.
- Leaders complete a very extensive quality of care review. This document should be improved to provide a sharper focus on progress in the home and areas for future development.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Whenever possible, staff in day-to-day contact with children should include staff from the different gender groups. Where the home's statement of purpose makes it explicit that the home uses staff of one sex only, clear guidance will need to be in place and followed as to how children are enabled to maintain relationships with people of a different gender. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.22)
- There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the quality standards every six months, registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weaknesses in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children living at, or staying in, this home have highly complex healthcare needs and disabilities. Prior to admission, leaders and staff spend extensive amounts of time in healthcare settings with professionals and families who know the children well. This helps them to gain a full understanding of the needs, preferences and capabilities of the children. As a result, children benefit from tailored, detailed care planning processes that assist the staffing team in delivering very high-quality care. Wherever possible, leaders and staff continue to work in partnership with parents and carers to deliver the most positive care experience for children and their families.

Transitions into educational settings and transitions for children who are moving to forever families have also been managed in an exceptionally comprehensive and coordinated manner. One parent, who adopted a child that lived at the home until recently, was supported on a progressive basis to develop a very strong bond with his son and gain a detailed understanding of his complex care needs. This process took approximately one year. The parent said, 'They are really committed and they really do care. The management know what they are doing, they are really experienced. Everything he needed, they did it straight away. You could not have asked for any more. I felt like part of the team.' This is an example of exceptional child-centred practice and

offers the highest level of consistency of care to children.

The children living at this home are very settled and appear relaxed, comfortable and happy in their surroundings. Each child benefits from care that is delivered by staff who show genuine affection and warmth, and have developed close relationships with them, based on trust and a high level of knowledge of their communicative preferences, routines and needs. The care provided for children is highly consistent and staff work exceptionally well together to enhance the group's quality of life, experiences and outcomes. One parent said, 'It makes me feel more relaxed knowing that he is well taken care of and they make us feel so welcome. He has been in hospital all of his life and now we have found this place and it's wonderful.'

Healthcare arrangements are excellent. Children have very comprehensive plans and all their specialist health appointments are proactively arranged and maintained. A healthcare professional works alongside the team to ensure that they are clinically competent to meet the needs of the children. Each child has a 'healthcare hospital pack' which details their routines and needs, to ensure that all professionals are familiar with their individual medication and specialist equipment requirements. This is designed to enable clinical staff to deliver appropriate treatment, when required, with greater ease. Staff have had specialist training in administering medication and operating ventilation and mobility equipment safely.

Leaders ensure that staff understand the research and evidence that underpin their practice. As an example, one child who recently moved into the home has a standing frame. The staff are required to utilise the frame regularly, alongside other aids and adaptations in the home. This ensures that the child is making good progress with her mobility and posture, both of which are vital to her future physical health. The staff team was briefed on the aims of this equipment and helped to understand the research that supports the evidence-based benefits of regular use. The use of research-based practice is also evident when staff are meeting the sensory and communication needs of children.

Children have made progress in their ability to communicate with others. Staff work hard to understand the intricacies of their non-verbal expressive strategies. Staff have very regular discussions and share experiences among themselves. This ensures that there is a collective understanding of children's communicative preferences which provides the greatest opportunities for the children to influence the care they receive. Two of the children have begun to learn to use electronic devices to answer questions. This is outstanding progress.

Most children are accessing education and are progressing positively in their individual settings. One child is not yet of statutory school age, but plans are already in place for her to attend an early years provision. One young person who had never accessed formal education outside of her family home is now attending college four days each week. This is outstanding progress, as she is benefiting from increased opportunities to interact with adults and her peers and her levels of understanding and engagement have developed significantly.

Staff ensure that children access community resources and positive activities within the local area to aid their social development and increase their tolerance of different environments. This prevents social isolation, increases children's participation in society and provides them with a sense of belonging within the community. All activities are carefully risk assessed and staffed accordingly.

Families are welcome to visit the home, in line with the placing authorities' agreed plans. The staff team works hard to ensure that families are able to celebrate special occasions with their children. The staff understand the value of children maintaining close relationships with people who are important to them. One family was able to enjoy a holiday with their child, which was facilitated by staff. Other families are invited to Christmas dinner at the home. Each family has different support requirements, but all of those needs are accommodated by the dedicated staff team at this home. One parent said, 'We are really happy, we visit often during the week. Whenever we go he is always happy and smiley. They do their absolute best for him.'

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

All children have very comprehensive risk management plans in place. These outline every aspect of their daily routines and are necessary to ensure that staff provide consistent and safe care. Every activity is risk assessed to a high level that matches the support needs of each child. When the team takes the children out of the area, local hospitals are notified to allow healthcare professionals to absorb information in advance, and ensure that the children are afforded the high level of care that may be required in the event that they need to be hospitalised.

Safeguarding incidents are rare, as children have high levels of supervision and support. One child sustained an unexplained injury, for which the staff team sought prompt medical attention. This was immediately referred to outside agencies and investigated in accordance with safeguarding protocol. The investigation concluded that the injury was part of a recognised medical condition. Leaders commissioned an independent review into all the equipment used at the home and all risk management plans were revised to further reduce any future risk of injury to the child. This demonstrates a high level of commitment to ensuring that children become increasingly safe in this environment.

Medication is stored safely and securely. The medication administration process is continuously reviewed and revised to meet the needs of children, and to enhance practice in this area. There are protected medication timetables where no other activities take place to ensure that the focus is on safe administration. This area of practice is audited regularly by a healthcare professional who is based at the home. All children have personal care needs and the staff work very attentively to preserve the dignity and privacy of children at all times.

During the inspection, a complaint was made to the inspector from a family member. The registered manager responded sensitively and appropriately, which provided confidence that the home takes any expression of dissatisfaction very seriously and

works with families to allay any concerns they may have. All staff members have had enhanced levels of safeguarding training. The home is very well maintained and regular health and safety checks and fire evacuation processes take place to ensure that children live in an environment that is largely free from hazards. Highly stringent recruitment and selection processes ensure that staff are suitably vetted prior to commencing work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is an exceptionally competent, enthusiastic and child-centred leader with a wealth of experience of caring for children who have significant complex needs and disabilities. She has the required level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. The majority of staff hold the necessary level 3 qualification and the rest are working towards this award. The manager is supported by an experienced and knowledgeable deputy manager. Both leaders have a thorough oversight of care practices in the home, and a detailed understanding of the highly complex, individual care needs of the children. They promote a culture of high aspiration and expectations with regard to the level of care provided for the children who live at the home.

The staff are committed and motivated to help the children to reach their full potential. The team is wholly comprised of female staff members and a good practice recommendation is made to address the gender imbalance. The setting is achieving the aims and objectives as defined within the statement of purpose. Staff report that the service is very well managed, and that they feel happy and fulfilled in their roles. Many of the professionals and families who have provided feedback about the service have highlighted in particular that leadership is a core strength of the service.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme, some aspects of which are centred on achieving competence in meeting the specialist health and care needs of children. Staff also benefit from individual development programmes. One staff member said about the organisation, 'They really do invest in their staff.' The training programme, alongside regular qualitative supervision and other support structures, equips the team to meet the complex care needs of the children at the home. Care planning is highly individualised, and is subject to regular review and appropriate revision. As a result, children are making exceptional progress across all aspects of their development.

There are no recommendations or requirements from the last inspection. The registered manager has a highly aspirational and detailed development plan; which demonstrates that the team works very hard to continually enhance the physical environment in the home, details the ongoing development of the staff and records the strong partnerships with education and healthcare providers. The development plan demonstrates how the home's actions produce exceptional outcomes and developmental progress for the children who live, or stay, at the home. The manager's review of the quality of care is extensive and very detailed. A recommendation is made to develop this information to

produce a succinct evaluation of the strengths and areas of focus for development within the home.

Placing authorities and partners have provided very positive feedback about the service provided at the home, and about how the leadership team works well in partnership with them. One social worker said, 'From everything I have seen, they are excellent.' Another said, 'They go over and above what is expected, they are consistent with what they offer.'

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: SC062309

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Courtyard Care Limited

Registered provider address: Optima House, 100 Manchester Road, Denton, Manchester M34 3PR

Responsible individual: Colin Gallimore

Registered manager: Gemma Heath

Inspector

Nicola Thomas: social care inspector

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