

SC037521

Registered provider: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by the local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation, under short-break arrangements, for up to eight children or young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities, some of whom have complex and/or life-limiting conditions. The service has an additional emergency bed.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 December 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 **good**

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: 16 February 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 manager and staff know the children and young people's care needs and vulnerabilities very well. They successfully meet the care needs by providing highly structured and individualised care for the children and young people who access the short-break service.
- Safeguarding practice is given high priority. Trusting and secure relationships have developed between the staff, children, young people and their families. Parents have confidence in, and are reassured by, the quality of care provided by the staff team. The safety and well-being of the children and young people are of paramount importance.
- The children and young people are exposed to a wealth of positive experiences in the home, and through community activities. They have opportunities to develop meaningful peer friendships due to the careful matching process that takes place.
- The diverse and complex health needs of the children and young people are clearly known, understood and well met by the manager and staff team. Relationships with health professionals underpin the ability of the staff to administer medication correctly and attend to individual health and feeding processes.
- Transitions, both into and out of the home, are well planned and are tailored to the individualised needs of the child or young person, and their family. Parents feel totally at ease in the knowledge that their child, while progressing to adulthood, will not be without continuing care and support.
- The manager is motivated and knowledgeable, and has high aspirations for the children, the young people and the staff team.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager needs to ensure that case records, care plans and behaviour management plans are consistently updated by the staff team.
- The manager, in conjunction with the senior leadership team, needs to prioritise staffing levels and staff rotas to ensure that short breaks are not cancelled as a result of an emergency admission or staff sickness.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/01/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people receive consistent and high-quality care from a well-established and diverse staff team. The home is welcoming and homely, and radiates warmth and laughter. The children and young people feel safe and secure, and experience a sense of belonging. This has resulted in all the children and young people, regardless of their disabilities or complex health and learning needs, being involved in the day-to-day activities of the home. The lounge has a vibrant and eclectic atmosphere, and the staff plan activities and celebrate diversity that meet the range of needs and choices of the children and young people. The recent Christmas party was a resounding success with children, young people and their families, past and present, enjoying festive food and activities. When one young person was asked what he wanted for Christmas he said: 'A week staying at [Name of home]!'

The children and young people have the opportunity to develop friendships and socialise with their peers in a safe environment. They are able to do this because of the careful matching that takes place during the referral and admission process. The children and young people seldom get the opportunity to spend quality time and engage with their peers when at home. Attending respite at this home has provided these opportunities. The children and young people make choices about how they wish to spend their time together, which builds their self-confidence and social skills. This has seen the children and young people flourish and make sustained progress relative to their complex needs and disabilities. On a recent outing to watch a football match at a new stadium, a social worker who works on behalf of parents said: 'It was unbelievable what they did for our children. Full credit to the staff.'

The home is well equipped, with a sensory room, a ball pool, a television and computer gaming area, and an abundance of craft activities. The children and young people have a voice, and participated in developing the outside areas of the home. A parent enthusiastically said: '[Name] absolutely loves it at [Name of home]. He gets his case ready and is so excited. He comes twice a week and knows all the staff really well. It's a fantastic place.'

Highly individualised planning ensures that the children and young people have a smooth and welcoming transition into the home. Staff are adept at managing any concerns and anxieties faced by the parents and carers. As a result, parents and carers are reassured and confident that their children are being cared for by a diverse, diligent and motivated staff team. As testament to this, a professional commented: 'Children experience a really positive transition. Staff work very flexibly. Three placements over the last few months have been in an emergency. The manager and staff are extremely good at anticipating difficulties, alleviating anxieties and working collaboratively.'

A significant strength of the home is the relationships that have been developed and established with partner agencies, including health and social care professionals. Each

child and young person has an individualised healthcare plan that ensures that the staff are fully appraised of their complex health and medical needs, and can administer safe and consistent care. Staff training ensures that they are equipped to provide a range of medical procedures, such as enteral and gastrostomy feeding techniques, moving and handling, and managing epilepsy. A parent said that their child's food intake is closely monitored. The staff consistently use a food diary and regularly check whether there are any dilatory changes. Medication is administered to the child to support him to sleep at night, and the medication is stored securely.

The whole ethos of the home is one of participation and inclusion. There are pictures and memorabilia around the home that remind the children and young people of their fun times and special memories. Achievements are celebrated, with staff presenting the child or young person with a 'WOW' moment memento that says: 'TODAY [NAME] HAS HAD A WOW MOMENT BECAUSE..... WELL DONE YOU.' The children and young people have fully participated in the home's journey, being involved in the monthly newsletters and a 'feel good' wall, and in creating a staff team picture. Parents are encouraged to bring some home comforts that are kept at the home. The children and young people plan their own activities and complete an evaluation form that includes my activities, my thoughts and my targets. A parent said: 'My child loves his time spent here. He gets to access facilities and resources that we do not have at home. He asks every day if he is going. Also, all of the staff are great. They are easy to talk to and my child is happy enough to go to any of them to have his needs met. Because of all of this, I can completely relax when he's there and get the rest I need.'

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

Ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and young people is given high priority. The home has recently facilitated two emergency admissions that have seen the manager and staff being proactive in ensuring that systems are in place that prepares for such admissions. This has ensured the delivery of optimum care in protecting the more vulnerable children and young people. High staff ratios, with all children and young people receiving one-to-one care, guarantee their safety, and their protection from themselves and others. A social worker said: 'The manager and all of the staff go above and beyond in ensuring the safety and protection of the children and young people. They all have a wealth of experience. The manager supports social care. It is a fantastic service, adaptable and flexible.'

The administration and management of complex health conditions, and for some children and young people limited life expectancy, are undertaken by a fully competent and skilled staff team. Risk assessments underpin the protective measures that are in place to ensure that the children and young people are safe when out in the community, or in the home's environment. Children and young people are clearly aware of their individual vulnerabilities and are adept at anticipating predictable behaviours that may cause harm to themselves and others. A parent said: 'The home is a very welcoming, safe environment with excellently trained and friendly staff. I feel very confident leaving my child in their capable hands.'

There is a vigorous and transparent safeguarding culture in the home, and staff are fully appraised and trained in identifying and responding to concerns about the safety of a child or young person. Statutory procedures are maintained. Multi-agency working practices ensure that the safety of the individual is at the centre of all decision making. The children and young people are physically held when they are at risk of harming themselves or others. All incidents are thoroughly recorded, and the manager uses learning from such incidents to evaluate and enhance practice. A member of staff said: 'Physical intervention training also teaches you different ways to manage behaviour without using restraint. I feel that I am getting a wealth of experience from staff, the young person and by talking to parents.'

The children and young people receive exceptionally good support to manage their anxieties, which can affect their presenting behaviour. Staff support the children and young people to follow individualised behaviour support plans and structured routines. The staff are invariably by the side of children and young people, which has significantly helped in reducing the children or young people's anxiety levels, as they respond well to a more predictable daily life. A parent said: 'My child will hurt himself if he becomes frustrated or overanxious. The staff are able to help him calm down enough so he can move onto an activity and stop hurting himself.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is suitably qualified with a level 5 diploma in leadership and management. He has acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience, spanning a number of years working in residential care. The manager leads by example, and has nurtured a motivated and committed staff team that ensures the delivery of professional and safe practice and personal care. The result of this is a sustained improvement in the lives of the children and young people accessing the short-break service.

The manager is held in high regard by parents, professionals and the staff team. There is complete confidence in his management of the home and the standards of care that he aspires to. Close working relationships and regular communication have promoted improvements in the quality of care for the children and young people. One staff member said: 'This home really adopts a safe practice approach. Seeing the kids being able to build relationships and have lots of positive experiences and learn new things is amazing to see. It has really changed my perception of residential care and short-break provision.'

The manager said: 'We are on a continuous journey of improvement.' The manager understands the home's strengths and weaknesses very well, and utilises research-informed practice to develop a range of tools and approaches to communicate and engage with the children and young people. A parent said: 'My child's care plan is drawn out by us and the staff, so they always care for him in the way we want them to. But also, they give us great ideas on how to introduce new things to him and how to resolve any behaviours, which is always appreciated.'

The staff have received specialised training in medication, the Mental Capacity Act, deprivation of liberty, safeguarding and communication. The manager gives priority to continuous professional development, and staff are given specific responsibilities, such as participation and engagement with children and young people. This approach has resulted in the implementation of an abundance of new and innovative ideas. The staff benefit from support systems through supervision, individual development plans, team meetings and detailed shift handovers. The quality and regularity of supervision for some staff, and staff attendance at team meetings, are varied, leaving shortfalls that the manager must address.

The manager has amended the statement of purpose to ensure that the service operates in accordance with service requirements, and to accommodate the occasional need for emergency placements. The recommendation and requirement made at the last inspection relating to the quality and timeliness of regulation 44 reports have been addressed by the outsourcing and appointment of a new independent visitor. The manager takes complaints very seriously and responds within statutory timescales. Complaints have related to the cancellation of a respite period due to unforeseen circumstances. The manager, together with the senior leadership team, is ensuring that staffing and staff rotas are arranged so that cancellations are kept to an absolute minimum.

Professionals and parents are extremely positive about the manager and the staff team. The home's collaborative and holistic approach demonstrates the effective and meaningful relationships that the manager has built with partner agencies, professionals and parents. The manager's determination to be child centred is having a positive impact on the staff, as well as the children and young people who are receiving respite care.

The manager utilises his interactions and hands-on approach with the children and young people when evaluating the service delivery and the provision of high-quality care. Recent file audits have identified some inconsistencies in recording activity, and actions are in place to address this shortfall. Online survey reports, and feedback from stakeholders and independent visitors, are used to evaluate the service and contribute to a continuous journey of improvement in the safety and well-being of the children and young people.

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: SC037521

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 1AE

Responsible individual: Mary Jarrett

Registered manager: Darren Higgins

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

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