

SC036726

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County 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. It provides a residential service for seven young people and a short-break service for five young people. All the young people have moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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 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:

- Young people are happy and content. They make significant progress, especially in their health, behaviour, confidence and self-esteem.
- A committed and enthusiastic staff team provides excellent care that promotes excellent outcomes for all young people. Staff have warm and supportive relationships with young people.
- Open and transparent safeguarding systems ensure that young people are kept safe.
- Parents, carers and other professionals are highly complimentary about the care the home provides. They can clearly identify the progress that each young person makes because of living or visiting here.
- Highly effective and supportive managers lead a committed, qualified and competent staff team. Staff provide individualised, creative and caring approaches towards children and young people.
- The manager fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service. He has a comprehensive development plan in place to further improve the home's functioning.

The children's home's areas for development:

- A shortfall was identified in the fact that the home's practice is not in line with its policy in relation to the occasional propping open of fire doors.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/11/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

This specifically relates to ensuring that there is an assessment of risk in place regarding any propped open fire door.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make excellent progress and thrive. A social worker said, about a child who had recently started receiving short breaks, 'The visits are life-changing for this child. The child can access things in the community now and that's not by accident, it's because they are very skilled practitioners. The difference is life-changing for the child and the child's parents.'

Other examples of progress young people have made include experiencing new food groups, such as fruit. This is significant progress for one young person who was previously entrenched in only eating very particular foods of his choosing. As a result, the young person's health is improving. Other young people make progress towards gaining independence skills. A parent said, 'The progress my child has made has been really good. Any targets we set: they are delivered. We agree together on my child's targets. They are changing my child's life path. That goes back to the exceptional service they offer. My child has come on in leaps and bounds.'

Young people benefit from a range of experiences, some of which they may not ordinarily have had the opportunity to access. A strength of this home is the manager's and staff's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have access to as many opportunities as possible to enhance their life experiences, for example flying on an aeroplane, and taking part in voluntary work at a local historic place of interest. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff go above and beyond to provide young people with new experiences.'

Detailed care planning provides staff with the information and strategies they need to ensure that young people get the very best care to meet their varied and complex needs. Staff take part in thorough and comprehensive shift-planning meetings. This allows staff time to focus on young people's needs and to consider their targets. Members of staff know young people very well. They have warm, supportive relationships. There is lots of laughter and young people feel comfortable.

Staff manage the health and medical needs of young people very effectively, and in partnership with parents where appropriate. Staff fully understand each young person's medical history and presenting needs. All young people attend medical appointments as necessary. Vital health information is readily available, ensuring swift attention in the event that medical intervention is needed. Medication administration practice is excellent.

Young people's participation in their own care is encouraged. Young people are helped to make choices. These choices are tailored to young people's own levels of communication or understanding. Young people were working on a 'Children's Charter' during the inspection. An independent advocate regularly visits the home and gave very positive feedback about how members of staff act on any feedback the advocate gives.

Young people benefit from a high standard of accommodation. The home is well resourced and has a fantastic outside area. Recently, new touch screen pads have been installed to help young people make food choices. These are well used, with 'chocolate biscuit' being a favourite request. The manager is fully aware that bathrooms are beginning to look tired and are past their best. He has a plan for improvement and is awaiting funding to begin refurbishment.

Planning and preparation for new young people moving into the home, or coming for short breaks, is thorough. Parents and carers are fully part of the transition process. Consideration is given to how compatible young people will be with each other. This thorough preparation helps to ensure that young people are made welcome and supported to settle. It also ensures that the existing group continues to thrive through this period of change. Young people settle quickly because of good communication with parents/carers and multi-agency partners, well-planned transitions, clear boundaries, and consistent routines. Staff and managers advocate on behalf of young people who are moving to adult services, ensuring that the transition is as smooth as possible.

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

Safeguarding takes the highest priority in the home. The manager and staff have a detailed understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They follow appropriate safeguarding procedures when they need to. Ensuring that children are kept safe encompasses all areas of the service. For example, there are rigorous recruitment checks, and risk assessments are of a very high quality. Most importantly, there is an open safeguarding culture among the staff team, which is encouraged and supported by leaders and managers. Any concern brought to the attention of managers is treated seriously. Parents recognise the clear safeguarding ethos that the home has, and are reassured by this. One stated, 'My child gets the best care there. It's a transparent place and that's something to say. If something happens or if something's said then everyone knows about it. It's an open culture. Staff would have the confidence to know it was wrong and to tell someone. It's open.'

Some young people make very good progress in understanding how to keep themselves safe. Staff work diligently with young people and take every opportunity to help them

understand socially acceptable behaviour, for example in the swimming pool. Highly effective management of risk, through detailed risk assessments, ensures that young people are safe while still enjoying a range of activities and experiences.

The environment is kept safe by comprehensive health and safety checks and monitoring. On occasion, fire doors are temporarily propped open. This is usually to aid supervision of young people by staff from a distance or to encourage independence, for example so that young people take their empty plates from the dining room to the kitchen. Staff are fully aware of the need to close these fire doors as soon as the room is unoccupied, so that in the event of a fire the door can act to reduce the spread of fire and smoke. However, this procedure is not written down anywhere. The home's fire risk assessment does not yet reflect how this risk has been considered.

Incidents of negative behaviour and the use of physical intervention are rare. Staff develop approaches and strategies to help young people manage their behaviour based on their growing knowledge and understanding of young people's individual needs. In-depth reviews of incidents provide staff with opportunities to learn. Monitoring provides the manager with an overview of where and why progress is made, highlighting particular practices that help young people. This results in fewer incidents of difficult behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an experienced and knowledgeable manager who is highly effective. He uses academic research to influence the care provided in the home. He continues to improve and develop the service using a comprehensive development plan, which is understood by staff. For example, a new system of staff handover between shifts is being trialled with the aim of adding greater structure to the process. This demonstrates how leaders, managers and staff are not afraid to try new ideas with the intention of improving the service. The manager said, 'We don't rest on our laurels. We are always looking for the next thing.'

The staff team, including new members of staff, feel well supported. Staff members have opportunities to take on extra responsibilities such as leading the shift. New staff benefit from a comprehensive induction and good levels of training which enable them to comprehensively meet the needs of young people. Staff benefit from excellent support through regular and in-depth supervision, case-management meetings, and team meetings. Staff are either qualified to the appropriate level or are enrolled on the relevant course. This ensures that all staff are appropriately qualified in a dedicated residential childcare qualification. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff are professional, knowledgeable, and are experts in what they do.'

There is effective monitoring of the service by leaders and managers. Systems are in place to ensure that there is oversight and scrutiny of any incidents, as well as careful monitoring of the day-to-day operation of the home. For example, the duty manager and shift leader regularly liaise with each other to ensure that all young people's needs are being met. This high level of monitoring ensures that young people benefit from the best

care possible.

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: SC036726

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Vonny Senogles

Registered manager: Robin Taylor

Inspector

Catherine Honey, Social care inspector

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