

SC036732

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to eight children and young people who have significant learning disabilities and associated challenging behaviour. This includes one placement that can be used for emergencies.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 April 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 17 April 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/04/2018	Full	Good
07/08/2017	Full	Good
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/11/2016	Full	Good

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
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p>	07/06/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from well-planned stays with peers, a stable staff group and consistent routines and boundaries. Staff are skilled at building positive relationships with children, taking account of their preferences, their personalities and their interests.

Staff ensure that they have information from all relevant sources so that they can meet each child's individual needs. Children visit the home before they stay overnight.

Staff consult with children using a range of communication methods to understand their choices. Staffing levels fit each child's risk assessment and mean that children benefit from individual attention and sensitive monitoring.

The inspector observed children arriving and leaving with their families and carers. It is a positive, calm, welcoming environment. One parent said: 'My son's face lights up when he arrives. The atmosphere is lovely. Every member of staff is welcoming and warm.'

Parents and social workers report that they are assured children are safe and well cared for. Children grow in confidence and self-esteem because of the positive relationships they develop.

Children's health needs are known and are met. Children respond positively to predictable, sensitive routines, and as a result have improved sleep patterns and reduced medication.

Managers take account of children's needs, staff observations, feedback from children, and parents' views, when planning which children have their stays together. A manager said: 'It is really important we assess children's views and wishes. To do this well, we need to have good relationships and excellent communication with families and carers.'

Children are involved in choices and decisions about their care throughout their stay. Examples include choices about their meals, activities, their personal care and their routines. Staff respect children's privacy and dignity when meeting their needs.

Managers have developed their relationship and communication with the relevant transitions teams so that they can support children effectively when they are moving on from this service. They share information at planning and person-centred meetings to influence decisions for children.

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

Staff have undertaken training on safeguarding disabled children. They adhere to child protection policies and procedures. They recognise the importance of skilled communication, observations, and taking account of the additional vulnerabilities of disabled children, to inform risk assessments.

Children have individual detailed risk-management plans. There are appropriate staffing levels to support monitoring of children's behaviours and well-being. Some children may harm themselves or others because of their needs. Staff are trained in diversion and distraction techniques to de-escalate behaviours. As a result, staff rarely physically intervene and when they do, they use low-level interventions.

Positive behaviour is reinforced. Staff support children to learn about and understand appropriate behaviour.

Records show that staff follow agreed strategies to reduce risk of harm and carefully reflect on practice following any interventions. This includes the context to any incident, such as changes at home or at school. Managers share learning about responses to interventions. Children's plans include 'what works for me' and 'what does not work for me'. They are regularly updated.

Staff record and report any concerns. Detailed reports of any incidents, accidents, illness or medication errors are completed and reviewed by a manager. Information is shared with carers and professionals, and informs each child's assessments and plans.

Children have reduced incidents of aggressive behaviours and self-injurious behaviours because of the care they receive and the relationships they have developed during their short breaks.

There are effective safe-recruitment practices in place. Parents are given the opportunity to be part of the recruitment process to represent the voice of the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This home has a very experienced, skilled registered manager and an established, stable management and staff team. There are sufficient staff to provide individualised care, and the majority of staff are qualified.

The management team has sought advice, followed procedures and addressed any staff performance issues appropriately.

There are comprehensive induction and probation programmes for all staff. These include mandatory training and supplementary training for staff to ensure that they can meet the needs of the children and keep them safe.

There are effective night care arrangements in place. Managers have introduced a process of shadowing a night carer shift regularly throughout the year to inform supervision and development of night care staff and quality assure the experience of children. This is a positive development and demonstrates that managers value the night-care role.

Since the previous inspection, managers have developed and delivered a training programme to support observational assessments of children's views and wishes. This is still being established in staff practice. Records viewed demonstrated that this tool ensures that more weight is given to the child's voice in their care planning and their experience in the home.

There is also clear guidance regarding expectations of the shift leader role for staff, to support staff development and consistent practice. There is a daily duty manager to oversee staffing and staff practice. As a result, children have positive experiences and receive well-planned, individualised care.

The management team needs to improve monitoring and review systems to support good practice and consistent, good-quality records. Some children's records viewed did not have up-to-date local authority care plans or education and healthcare plans available to inform the home's plan.

In addition, managers have developed and introduced a measurable outcomes tool for staff to use in their key-work sessions and planning for children. This was reviewed in some children's records. It is not yet being consistently or effectively used. Therefore, managers cannot demonstrate the impact of this tool, in helping them to understand

children's progress and outcomes.

There are regular, well-planned team meetings, and staff benefit from supervision that provides support and advice. Staff have opportunities to contribute to development of the service and are listened to. For example, staff raised the need for more flexible transport for the home to support children's activities. This has now been addressed.

This home has good partnership working with professionals and families. The managers produce a newsletter that is shared with families. They host regular family days and siblings' days so that families and carers enjoy activities with children and staff in the home.

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: SC036732

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: John Branchflower (Interim)

Registered manager: Lynda Lever

Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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