

# SC037521

Registered provider: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home provides planned, short-break overnight respite care, seven days a week, for up to eight children or young people. The home also offers a short-break placement as an emergency placement. The home supports children and young people aged between eight and 18, who may have physical or sensory disabilities, and/or complex health needs. They aim to provide opportunities and experiences for children and young people to develop their skills.

The registered manager is fully qualified and has numerous years of experience, which he uses to support the staff and the children and young people.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 October 2019

**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:** 4 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
16/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/11/2016	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people are highly supported to engage in numerous activities to significantly enhance their skills. They would not have these opportunities if they did not attend this home. The home has introduced activity coordinators whose role is to increase the opportunities available to the children and young people, such as a day trip to an outward-bound activity centre which was adapted to cater for their needs, while ensuring that activities are robustly risk assessed and fully planned. The staff team is very confident in following the plans and exploring new activities with the children and young people.

Training in principles around well-being, learning and growth have proved invaluable for two members of staff who have taken steps to share their learning with the team. This ethos is embedded in the team's approach to working with the children and young people. The approach focuses on promoting their social skills and independence while engaging in activities. It is adapted to the child or young person's needs and abilities, which ensures that they engage and develop their independence skills as much as possible.

The home is actively involved in the community and readily involves all the children, young people and their families in events. These have included different fundraising events and summer fairs. The children and young people are actively encouraged to be involved in planning how to spend the money that they raise to improve the experiences available.

Children and young people are provided with various ways to communicate with staff. Resources, such as Makaton books, are available in every room to support communication. The staff actively seek feedback from the children and young people in different ways because they feel it is important that they act on it. This includes consulting with them after every activity to enable the staff to adapt future activities.

The home has employed an initiative which regularly uses young inspectors who visit the home to gather the views of the children and young people independently. The visits provide a valuable opportunity for children and young people's voices to be heard, and the staff team is quick to act on any suggestions to improve the experiences of the children and young people. This is an innovative way of capturing the wishes of children and young people and promotes good social contact between the children and young people who take on the inspector role.

The home is currently liaising with another agency to develop ways of working to effectively gather complaints and compliments. The home is piloting the new scheme and, once completed, the scheme will be shared with other services, including those outside the local authority. The scheme will significantly improve the way in which children and young people's opinions are heard across all services. This improved communication will enable them to have more input into all aspects of their lives.

The managers and staff team are very astute at recognising the health needs of the children and young people and work with other agencies to meet the children and young people's needs. The staff have challenged the protocols in place for one young person, due to lacking clear guidance, which potentially puts the young person at risk. This has been a very inclusive approach, which has not prevented them from accessing the service. The staff have developed a set of interim measures which have been implemented while additional meetings take place with health professionals.

When children and young people have stayed at the home on a longer-term basis, the team has been proactive in adapting their care to meet the individual needs. The adaptations have included balancing activities, supporting full attendance at school and actively challenging so that a permanent placement might be found. In addition, health needs were fully met by the staff who registered the children and young people with local services, and they sought additional support when needed. The children and young people have progressed significantly from their starting points as a result of the level of care provided. The improvements have been maintained.

The staff work closely with the families of the children and young people to communicate the families' needs. The recognition by the staff team that the respite care also supports the families is clear to see, as they adapt to meet the needs of the children and young people to ensure that they can still attend. When further family support is identified as being needed, the staff are proactive in requesting support from relevant services. The services and support that have been put in place make a significant difference and enable the children, young people and their families to have a high quality of life at the home and in their own homes.

The home is maintained to a high standard and meets the needs of all the children and young people. Plans are in place for a refurbishment as a preventative measure to maintain the high standards of the home. The manager is having discussions with specialists regarding the colours to be used that will meet the needs of the children and young people, to support them further.

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

Staff know the children and young people extremely well, and given the number who access the service the detailed knowledge the staff have is to be commended. Knowing the children and young people so well has enabled the staff to react and prevent incidents occurring, which has resulted in a minimal number of incidents and no restraints.

The children and young people feel confident to raise issues and concerns with staff, and these concerns are acted on to improve their lives. Children and young people in longer-term placements said that they feel safe and their ability to engage with others significantly improves as a result.

Full, comprehensive risk assessments are in place for all children and young people. The

assessments are regularly reviewed to protect the children and young people by ensuring that information about risks and strategies for dealing with them are kept up to date and shared with staff. Staff are confident in following these plans, which provides consistency and safety for the children and young people. The team works collaboratively with the families and other professionals to ensure that the way in which the staff work is consistent with the way others are working.

Safeguarding training has been ongoing and has benefited the staff team, which is clear about how to safeguard children and young people. Plans are in place for further training in relation to disabilities, which will continue to support the knowledge of the staff team. Safeguarding concerns are raised and acted on quickly to ensure that children and young people are safe. This involves communicating with others, such as school and families, to ascertain the cause of any injuries. Investigations are undertaken quickly and effectively when needed, and the staff team is clear about the importance of recording the details of any such incidents and raising concerns with senior members of staff.

Children and young people who are moving into the home are transitioned fully and risk assessments are completed. Their needs are quickly identified, and they will only be admitted once the staff are confident that they are able to provide the right level of care and support for the children and young people. However, this does not unnecessarily limit access to the short-break service, and the staff ensure that interim measures are put in place to manage any risk. Additional measures have included sourcing additional furniture, training and working with families to provide medication until the staff are in a position to do this themselves. New children and young people are matched with those currently accessing the home to make sure that their needs are well catered for and that all of them will benefit from the attentive staff and high-quality care.

Fire procedures are clear, and steps have been taken to make sure that all staff and children and young people are aware of how to be safe should a fire occur. The staff have created individual personal evacuation plans. No more than two children and young people in wheelchairs are able to stay overnight at any one time and safety doors are in place to enable children and young people to remain in the building next to exit points to reduce their anxiety, while keeping them safe. These steps demonstrate effective planning and good understanding of contingency arrangements so that children and young people with a high level of needs are kept safe.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the aims of the home and are aspirational in their approach to supporting children and young people. The leaders and managers want to provide the best possible care and are clear that to achieve this they need to support and develop the staff's skills.

All staff are fully qualified, and new staff complete a high-quality induction prior to becoming permanent members of the team, to ensure that they are able to fulfill the role and support the children and young people. The high expectations of staff are providing the children and young people with a high quality of care.

Supervisions are reflective and offer staff opportunities to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well as the emotional support that they feel they need. The staff are able to receive constructive feedback and are supported to develop as well as to maintain their own mental health and well-being. The importance of the mental health support has been recognised, and the staff have access to outside support provided by the home.

The home has introduced weekly team meetings. There is an expectation that all staff attend a minimum of one per month, taking account of the nature of the shift patterns and intense work the staff undertake with the children and young people. The weekly meetings promote consistency across the team, and areas of importance are repeated regularly to ensure that they are embedded within the team.

The manager is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and plans are in place to continue to improve the service offered. The manager has recognised that there are a limited number of homes similar to his and has developed links with other services outside the area. He has visited these other homes to develop his own knowledge, to develop new ways of working and to share best practice.

Leaders model how to interact with the children and young people to give staff further confidence and to show that they are part of a team which supports the children and young people. The manager and deputy managers are aware of the additional stress that may be on a member of staff when supporting specific children and young people. They support the staff by ensuring that they understand the plans for providing care and they reassure the staff.

Leaders and managers are confident in challenging others and they ensure that the right level of support is received both by children and young people using the short-break service and those using the emergency bed. This has led to improvements in the care received and the resources available to the children and young people.

The emergency bed was used for a long period of time for the same young person, which does not conform to the current conditions of the home. An application for a change to conditions is required, which will enable the home to provide care in accordance with its statement of purpose. The young person was admitted on a short-term basis, and the manager challenged the lack of plans for the future throughout the young person's placement. The team supported the young person extremely well, and there was significant progression in all aspects of the young person's life.

## **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 home (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's home 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

Debra Boldy: social care inspector



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