

SC034210

Registered provider: North Yorkshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home, which now operates from one site, offers pre-planned short breaks in a residential setting to children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities and associated complex healthcare needs. This could include autism spectrum disorder, communication and behavioural difficulties. The home can also offer extended and bespoke packages of care. The home is owned and managed by a local authority. The manager has been registered since May 2016. At the time of the inspection, 28 children and young people were having overnight short-break stays.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 December 2019

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: 11 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2018	Full	Outstanding
23/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/09/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff team's careful planning helps to build up a comprehensive picture of the children's and young people's health-related/healthcare needs and behavioural difficulties. They develop a highly individualised introduction programme which prepares children and young people for their short-break stays. The children and young people gradually get to know the staff, which helps them quickly settle and relax. They have a more enjoyable experience and are soon ready to stay overnight. Parents observe their children's joy and excitement, and see first-hand the knowledge and skill of the friendly and nurturing staff team. This makes parents feel confident about leaving their children at the home. One parent said, 'Trust is a big thing. Making the decision for someone to care for my child was not taken lightly. I am reassured he is in the best care possible.'

Since the last inspection, significant refurbishment and redecoration have been carried out at the home. These improvements have enhanced children's and young people's experiences further. The well-equipped state-of-the-art sensory room and the individual multisensory garden areas provide children and young people with a plethora of stimulating and relaxing experiences. Children's and young people's coordination and motor development improve as they explore their environment.

The staff use the home's specially adapted equipment, such as riser beds, cooker, sinks and baths, to help the children and young people to progress their independent living skills. The staff work closely with parents and education staff, and attend care planning meetings. This provides a coordinated and consistent approach, such as working with parents and education staff on toileting programmes. There are numerous examples of the progress children and young people make. These are captured and celebrated on the 'achievements' notice board.

The children and young people take part in a diverse range of interesting activities in the community. They have new and exciting experiences, such as going on residential activity breaks or enjoying a music festival, that they may not be able to experience at home. This boosts children's and young people's confidence in their abilities, and helps them to integrate socially. Careful planning and matching give children and young people the chance to stay at the same time as their friends or others with similar needs and interests. Children and young people develop relationships and improve their social skills as they socialise with their peers. The staff's focus is on making sure that children and young people have fun times during their short-break stays. This is demonstrated by the multitude of photographs of the children's and young people's smiling faces around the warm and comfortable home.

The staff are highly effective in communicating with the children and young people. The staff's knowledge of the children and young people helps them to develop personalised methods of communication, such as eye pointing or using communication switches. The staff are creative, and develop and use a variety of communication methods such as Makaton, objects of reference or picture exchange communication systems. These are

enhanced by the staff writing individualised sensory stories to help children or young people to understand their care plans. This thoughtful and careful preparation makes sure that children and young people are actively involved in decision-making and the running of the home.

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

The children and young people are kept safe by a staff team that provides high levels of supervision and support. The staff's clear understanding of the children and young people in their care is exceptional. The child-friendly and highly informative care plans provide staff with up-to-date information. The plans clearly identify any changes in a child's or young person's care. This ensures that the staff can respond efficiently and quickly in an emergency, which is particularly important for those children and young people who have life-threatening health conditions.

A particular strength of the staff is their meticulous shift planning. Any activities are carefully risk-assessed to plan for every eventuality. As a result of the staff's thorough planning, there are rarely any incidents or accidents.

The staff's interventions help to prevent self-injurious behaviours and help to keep children and young people calm and regulated. The staff are assisted by the excellently presented and individualised plans that promote positive behaviour. Effective behaviour-management strategies provide consistent routines and boundaries that help and protect the children and young people. Restrictions of movement are rarely used.

The staff's excellent working relationships with professionals provide an important multidisciplinary approach. The staff provide professionals with information and take part in strategy meetings or other child protection meetings. When needed, the manager responds to emergency requests for a child or young person to have an extended short breaks stay. The staff team provides a flexible service to make sure children and young people are kept safe or to support parents and carers during a crisis.

The staff teach the children and young people to keep themselves safe. The staff use age-appropriate materials, and adapt these to help the children and young people to understand risks, such as those posed by online social media platforms. Individual sessions are repeated or children and young people have group work with their peers to reinforce these important messages.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The experienced manager is supported by a knowledgeable and competent management team. This means that strong leadership is provided by a highly committed and passionate team of people. Their open-door approach and involvement with the children and young people mean that this work ethic filters down to the dedicated staff team.

The manager has excellent time-management skills. She successfully managed the extensive refurbishment and redecoration of the home. This included integrating children and young people from another home that had closed. Her meticulous planning resulted in minimal disruption for the children and young people and their families, all of whom continued to receive a high-quality service.

New staff undertake a robust induction programme. The manager recruits ambitious and forward-thinking staff, which creates a culture where the whole team continues to develop new ideas so as to provide the best possible care for the children and young people. The staff team's recording is thorough and the monitoring carried out by managers is meticulous so that any areas for development can be identified and evaluated.

The staff team members said that they are very well supported in their role by the management team. They benefit from regular and extremely reflective supervision and team meetings. The high-quality training, which includes the provision of bespoke, child-specific medical information, keeps the staff fully up to date. These all promote the staff team's personal and professional development.

The staff are open and honest with each other. This helps them to constantly strive to improve through challenging each other. The staff work exceptionally well together, which has resulted in many successful events, such as the 'This Is Me' music festival and Christmas party. This makes sure that the children and young people and their families enjoy an excellent, action-packed day of events. The events are child-focused and accessible to everyone. In addition, young adults who used to attend the short-breaks service can return to see staff and meet old friends.

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: SC034210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall,
Northallerton DL7 8AD

Responsible individual: Karl Podmore

Registered manager: Katherine Clarke

Inspectors

Tina Ruffles: social care inspector (lead)

Ian Young: HMI

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