

SC036740

Registered provider: Nottinghamshire County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 20 children aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides accommodation for up to 12 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and has up to eight places for children accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989.

Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection date: 5 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2021

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

Staff are skilled at quickly getting to know children's needs and preferences. This means that they build positive relationships with children, which supports them to settle and make progress in the home.

Children benefit from well-structured routines and are expected to participate in education and activities. Children respond positively to the home's incentives scheme.

The home is generally welcoming and comfortable. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of availability of some specialist materials have delayed some maintenance work. This is being robustly followed up by managers and staff to limit any impact on children. On the day of the inspection, one child had large amounts of sugary food in their room. Staff had not identified this as a potential concern during daily room checks.

Policies and procedures that were developed to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are understood and consistently applied by staff. If children test positive for COVID-19, their interactions with others are carefully and sensitively managed to reduce the risk of spreading the infection.

Staff have worked closely with families and professionals to ensure that children have regular face-to-face visits with their family whenever possible. Arrangements for virtual visits when face-to-face contact has not been possible have also been good. This means that children maintain important relationships.

Managers have addressed two requirements from the last inspection. As a result, the quality of night-time checks has improved, and the home's bullying policy has been revised. The revised bullying policy means that any restrictions placed on children's interactions are more regularly reviewed by managers. However, this inspection identified one incident where a child was assaulted by a peer, despite concerns being expressed previously about their interactions. This is being followed up by managers.

On one occasion, a post-restraint debrief with a child did not take place within the required timescale. This meant that a prompt review of practice did not take place, which limited the child's opportunities to raise concerns or reflect on their behaviour. Some other records contain imprecise language and lack clarity. For example, in reference to the use of a sanction, one record referred to 'silly behaviour'.

External professionals report that the home is generally good at sharing information and communicates well. One professional reported that the child she has responsibility for has 'never looked so well' because of improved routines, diet and healthcare.

Incidents and allegations of harm have been appropriately reported to placing local authorities, the designated officer and Ofsted. Managers maintain detailed chronologies and have proactively followed up any delay in information-sharing by agencies. Managers undertake lessons-learned exercises where appropriate. As a result, there have been changes to policies and procedures, refresher training for staff, and improved practice.

Managers and staff robustly advocate for children if there are concerns about delays in services or planning. They also ensure that children have access to appropriate external advocacy that is tailored to their particular concerns and needs.

Monitoring of staff performance and staff attendance has improved. The leadership team has carefully managed the impact of staff sickness. There is now a bank of relief staff who know the home and the needs of the children well.

The home's education provision has not been inspected at this inspection. Recommendations relating to education that were made at the last inspection have been repeated and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/06/2021	Full	Good
01/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/06/2019	Full	Inadequate
11/12/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all management and staff vacancies are recruited to so that a full curriculum of education that meets the needs of learners can be delivered. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.2)
- The registered person should improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers and support assistants are able to implement a broad and rich curriculum well, maximising learning for all children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.2)
- The registered person should ensure that teachers identify children's starting points across all subjects and use that information to plan challenging learning activities that enable children to make good progress. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.2)
- Children's homes should comply with relevant health and safety legislations. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9) Specifically staff should ensure that children are not storing food in their rooms.
- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, taking the age of the child and the circumstances into account. A record should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.60)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) It is recommended that staff receive refresher training regarding effective recording and reporting.

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC036740

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

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

Responsible individual: Devon Allen

Registered manager: Paul Thomas

Inspectors

Cathey Moriarty, Social Care Inspector
Barnaby Dowell, Social Care Inspector

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