

SC034900

Registered provider: Nottingham City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide short breaks for up to 11 children and young people, at any one time, who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. It is owned and run by the local authority.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 February 2020

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers outstanding

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: 12 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
21/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/12/2016	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that records of restraint are kept which enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children's experiences are tremendously positive. There are many examples of children making considerable progress. Some children make so much progress that their lives are transformed. One child's anxiety levels meant that the child found it very difficult to interact with others or engage in social activities, and now enjoys a more fulfilling life, having developed effective coping strategies with the support of staff. One staff member talked about a child's progress and told the inspector: 'His world is changed.' Children come to the home only for short breaks, so it is notable that some progress has been life changing for both them and their family.

Staff help children to manage their complex behaviours so that they can have a better life. They help children to control and reduce their anxiety so that the children can manage in public places. This gives families the confidence to take their children to new places. Parents feel more confident that new activities are possible. This makes a difference to the child's family as a whole.

Parents are impressed with how staff help their children to make progress. One parent said: 'I want to clone his key workers and take them home.' Children enjoy very warm and nurturing relationships with staff. These relationships fill children with confidence and their self-esteem improves vastly.

Staff remove the barriers that disabled children face when accessing activities in the community. Many children now take part in activities that they had previously been unable to access due to their disability. One parent confirmed this by telling the inspector: 'I never thought he would be able to go ice skating.' Children feel part of the community. Staff support them to be involved in community events and fundraising projects, such as a sponsored bike ride.

Children develop quality, lasting friendships because of their short breaks. Staff understand the importance of friendships and recognise the difficulties that children with disabilities face in developing and maintaining friendships. Staff have studied this issue closely and, after recent training, have implemented some new ideas to help children to make friends. A boys' group has been developed, and the children have enjoyed additional 'sleepovers'. Also, managers have actively encouraged networking between the parents to increase opportunities for their children to spend time with their friends.

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

Staff help children to be safe. The sensitivity, skill and knowledge of staff enable them to tackle the most sensitive of issues with children. One child has received high-quality, one-to-one support in relation to their emerging sexuality. This child is safer, as a result.

Children's behaviour improves as a result of their short breaks. Leaders keep very close track of any patterns and trends in children's behaviour to make sure that progress

continues. Staff understand that behaviour is a form of communication and that, for some children, this may be their only method of communication. The consistently caring approach by staff means that children know what to expect, and the challenging behaviours reduce.

Physical interventions are used only as a last resort, and are generally carried out with great skill and sensitivity. However, one incident was not managed as well as it should have been. Leaders have recognised this and supported staff to reflect and to learn. Restraint records do not always give a clear enough account of what happened. Greater detail would allow for better scrutiny of any interventions for this vulnerable group of children.

Staff are very happy to reflect with their manager on their practice. One professional commented on the transparent safeguarding culture, saying: 'Anything you raise with them, they are the first people to say "We got that wrong."' Where mistakes have been made, for example minor medication administration discrepancies, lessons have been learned. The ethos of openness and reflection means that children remain safe and protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are highly influential in changing children's lives for the better. The impact of this provision on children is far reaching and impacts on their wider life. Clear, comprehensive and creative planning ensures that up-to-date research is made available to staff and incorporated into development plans. Leaders are innovators in the field of disability and their practice is worthy of sharing with others. They have started to influence other professionals. For example, one of the registered managers has been raising awareness of how children with autism spectrum disorders sometimes have associated mental health needs. She is improving local training on this subject.

The two registered managers are extremely capable leaders. They are well supported by highly effective assistant unit managers. All are instrumental in children's excellent progress. Recent developments include a parents' group. Parents receive very good support and are helped to build strong support networks with other parents. They report that the parents' group gives them renewed energy. Parents have learned about new initiatives and resources to improve their home life. Outside speakers and 'pop-up' shops have also been arranged. One parent talked to the inspector about her previous feelings of isolation and said that the group has been life changing for her and her wider family.

The staff team is very well established and highly motivated. All staff, whatever their role, work to the same positive, empowering ethos. For example, the service's cook has recently been to a child's home to give advice about the child's changing dietary needs.

Training is tailored to the individual needs of the children who use the service. Staff do their own research and cascade their learning to their colleagues. Knowledgeable outside speakers add great value to the training programme.

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 difference 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: SC034900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Nottingham City Council, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG

Responsible individual: Kay Sutt

Registered managers:

Joanne Wright

Ella Lawrence-Cowling

Inspector

Caroline Brailsford, social care inspector

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