

SC033840

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority short-break service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to nine children and/or young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. The service has a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 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 **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: 20 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/02/2018	Full	outstanding
16/02/2017	Interim	improved effectiveness
23/08/2016	Full	outstanding
09/03/2016	Interim	improved effectiveness

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, staff including the management team, to undertake training in the issues relating to county lines behaviour, as it might affect young people placed in the home.</p>	<p>30/09/2019</p>

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people are very happy to attend the home for short breaks, and are settled during their stays. Most attend regularly for many years, which only ceases as they move on to adult support. The range of positive feedback gathered from children and young people shows that they love the home and will miss it once they no longer attend.

The staff team provides exceptional levels of care for the children and young people. They form excellent relationships with them and provide nurturing, individual care based on their needs, likes and dislikes. One professional said, 'I am always very relieved when I hear that [children and young people] have been placed there, as I know they will receive first-class care.' Because of the approach of staff, children and young people feel valued and this helps them to enjoy their visits from when they first attend.

Members of staff forge very positive relationships with family members. As a result, parents and carers are confident about their children staying in the home. Parents and

carers provided extremely good feedback about the quality of care their children receive.

Children and young people make progress from their starting points. Staff measure progress against objectives that are reviewed regularly. Children and young people make new friends, which helps to improve their socialisation skills. As a result of the progress they make, children and young people are better equipped to enter adulthood.

The home is very well maintained and is fully accessible. The walls in all of the bedrooms feature cheerful murals that have been designed according to the views of children and young people. The murals include representations of children from different ethnic backgrounds. This reflects the diversity of the children and young people who attend the home. The design of the home means that children and young people can have time alone or be with others, depending on how they feel. This helps them to enjoy their short break and to be more positive about attending regularly.

Children and young people do a wide range of activities inside and out of the home. Some children and young people attended a community festival and others volunteered at a local running event. Because of these activities, children and young people develop links with their local communities and build positive memories of the time they spend in the home.

Staff provide a wide range of foods for children and young people and ensure they are involved in menu planning. Individual preferences and dietary requirements are accommodated. Children and young people who have halal food at home have halal food during their short breaks. Children and young people take their meals together, along with members of staff. As a result of the home's approach to mealtimes, children and young people improve their ability to socialise with adults and their peers, while enjoying healthy, home-cooked food.

Members of staff work closely with schools to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people are met. Members of staff attend education meetings. Parents who lack confidence when speaking with professionals appreciate the help their children receive because of the staff's support. Feedback from schools is entirely positive. Teachers feel that the home enhances the educational achievements of children and young people, and that this is due to the efforts of the staff team.

Members of staff work closely with health professionals in order to understand the complex needs of children and young people. Medication is stored and recorded appropriately. All staff receive training in the correct procedures. Members of staff liaise with health professionals if parents struggle to make sense of their children's complex needs. As a result of this approach, children and young people experience improved healthcare.

The views of children and young people are canvassed in a variety of ways, including direct communication and observation of behaviour. Children and young people attend children's meetings to look at plans for the future. They contribute to reviews and fill in questionnaires about the home. Children and young people become used to members of

staff asking their opinion. This improves their self-worth and builds an expectation that they have a right to be heard.

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

Children and young people are safe in this home. They are appropriately supervised and they are encouraged to try new experiences. They can make choices for themselves, including what activities they want to do and in which part of the home. The safety of their children is crucial for parents and carers. One parent said, 'I wouldn't let [my child] come here if they were not going to be safe. I totally trust the staff to do that.'

Members of staff use very clear, consistent boundaries and expectations with the children and young people. This results in positive behaviour. If difficulties arise, members of staff develop plans to address the issues. Because of the approach of the staff team, children and young people have short breaks that are calm and settled. This makes attending the home enjoyable for them and it reassures their parents and carers.

Children and young people do not go missing from this home. Sanctions and physical restraints are not used. All members of staff undertake training to equip them to manage potentially difficult situations. Members of staff use the positive relationships they have with the children and young people to prevent issues from arising. Because of this approach, children and young people enjoy short breaks that are free from stress and tension.

Members of staff, including ancillary staff, are knowledgeable about safeguarding the children and young people in their care. Staff do not allow visitors to come into the centre without formal identification, regardless of their role. Because of this emphasis, children and young people are safe. This reassures their parents and carers. It means that children and young people attend the home without being placed at risk.

Recruitment of staff is effective. If people attend the home to carry out extended work, for example kitchen fitting, they are required to have checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Because of this rigorous approach, children and young people are protected from anyone who might cause them harm.

Members of staff undertake work with the children and young people on issues such as radicalisation, internet safety and the safe use of mobile phones. The results of this work are displayed around the home. This essential work helps to keep them safe now, and prepares them for adulthood.

Members of staff do not have current knowledge of the risks posed to children and young people from county lines behaviour. Staff should be aware of the signs of this issue, to ensure prompt intervention if needed. Members of staff should undertake work on this topic with children and young people. Some of the children and young people are vulnerable to this behaviour. This home can play an important role in raising awareness with them and their families. A requirement is made in this respect.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This home is managed by an exceptional leadership team. The registered manager has high aspirations for the children and young people who attend the service and she expects her staff team to have the same ambition for children and young people. Her seniors support her effectively, and are competent in leading the home when she is not present. As a result of the registered manager's commitment and skills, the home consistently provides the best care for children and young people over a sustained period.

The registered manager leads an experienced staff team and deploys them effectively in order to ensure the staffing levels are good. Agency workers are not used. Many members of staff have worked at the home for a remarkably long time and newer members of staff remain in post. Children and young people are looked after by carers who are happy in their work and feel a sense of fulfilment as a result of looking after them. This is very important for the self-esteem and sense of self-worth of children and young people, and is reassuring for their parents and carers.

The registered manager has developed excellent relationships with other professionals. She is held in high esteem and receives exceptional feedback. The registered manager challenges professionals if they do not prioritise the children and young people who attend for short breaks.

The registered manager has very good monitoring systems in place. She knows what works well in the home, and when something might need to change. The registered manager implements any recommendations from external monitoring without delay. One member of staff said, 'If something needs doing, [the manager] makes it happen.' The manager's approach to monitoring arrangements means that children and young people enjoy excellent standards of care for as long as they attend the home.

Staff are routinely supervised and have appraisals of practice every year. The manager expects members of staff to undertake a wide variety of training courses to improve their knowledge. She is creative in the way that she helps established members of staff to reflect on what they know. This ensures that members of staff do not become indifferent to key practice issues. As a result, children and young people are looked after by a staff team that is both experienced and up to date with current childcare practice.

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: SC033840

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Middlesbrough Borough Council, PO Box 99,
Middlesbrough TS1 2QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Rudd

Registered manager: Jacqueline Baxter

Inspector

Jane Titley: social care inspector

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