

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 operates from two sites, offers pre-planned short breaks in a residential setting to children and young people who have complex health needs including autism spectrum disorder, communication, and behavioural needs. 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.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 September 2018

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: 23 August 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2017	Full	Outstanding
02/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/09/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

There are currently 33 children and young people using this exceptional short-breaks service. Children and young people have new and exciting experiences when they stay at the home. The creative staff team is proactive in developing different adventures. These include friends going out together on activities such as wall climbing and canoeing. These fun group outings give children and young people a sense of achievement as they challenge themselves. They also develop improved social skills through spending time with their peers.

Photographs decorate the walls, demonstrating the vast array of activities on offer at the home and in the community. The specially designed sensory garden has been enhanced and extended. Staff, with help from families, have developed an allotment area so that children and young people can learn how to grow fruit and vegetables. A new forest school area gives children and young people the chance to watch and learn about wildlife. These additions offer stimulation and add to children's and young people's sensory experiences.

The staff members are excellent at including children and young people in community events. The children's and young people's participation in a local charity fashion show demonstrated an improvement in their confidence and self-esteem. Alongside raising public awareness about issues faced by the children and young people, these events generate practical and financial support, so staff can offer new opportunities.

This year, the innovative staff team organised and held a large music festival for children, young people, their families and professionals. For some, this included the experience of camping on site. Families could share new experiences with their children that they would not ordinarily be able to do. One person attending reported, 'Everyone was equal. The organisers clearly had this in mind and they achieved it. This was evident everywhere. Not just people working, but families having a day that had no boundaries.'

Staff provide high-quality care and support. The team has extensive experience of caring for children and young people who have complex needs. Alongside having fun, staff support children and young people to make progress. The colourful and child-friendly development plans set individualised targets with easy-to-follow action plans. Staff reward and celebrate the small but significant amounts of progress made by children and young people, who take pride in seeing their photographs on the 'Our Achievement' display board. For one young person, increasing his tolerance of staying in shops allows him to have improved trips out with his family.

The 'Celebration of Me' project provides children and young people with the opportunity to tell their peers something important about their lives. This gives children and young people information about a whole range of topics, so they can develop an understanding of different countries, cultures and religions.

Young people transitioning to adult services celebrate their departure with peers. This often

involves parties, but for some this has involved a summer holiday to Blackpool. The practical and emotional support that staff provide for the young people and their families offers a smooth transition to their adult provision. One professional reported, 'They have a great, safe, caring environment and staff provide a wide range of opportunities. This is particularly important in helping them explore independence skills. This makes such a valuable contribution to the transition process into adult services.'

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

Staff provide close observation and supervision with high levels of support so that children and young people are kept safe. The inclusion of body maps on the daily recording sheets provides staff with a method for noticing any new injuries or bruising. This offers a high level of safeguarding, particularly for those children and young people who have no verbal communication and who need a high level of personal care.

Children and young people do not go missing from home and there are no known risks of criminal or sexual exploitation. Staff have an excellent insight into the children's and young people's individual vulnerabilities. These are well recorded in the highly individualised risk management plans. Staff know what measures to use to minimise risk, including specific strategies for supporting those children and young people who display self-injurious behaviours.

Staff take a consistent approach and monitor the effectiveness of behaviour management plans. The intuitive staff team learns how to defuse situations. Effective de-escalation strategies and a comprehensive knowledge of children and young people ensure that physical interventions are rarely required.

Staff teach children and young people how to keep safe. These individual sessions go at the child's or young person's pace, and when necessary are repeated. They include important topics such as internet safety and stranger danger. As some children and young people use mobile devices and games consoles, and have access to the internet, the staff complete individual e-safety assessments. These outline the risks involved for individuals and identify the level of supervision needed to keep children and young people safe when using the internet.

Effective risk management and comprehensive children's and young people's plans ensure that all the staff know what action to take to keep children and young people safe during the different activities. A similar risk assessment relating to the staff's ability and confidence regarding activities informs the managers about which staff are best placed to support children and young people.

The staff are reflective and always ensure that their actions are transparent. They learn from incidents and consider alternative responses and actions. Their high level of reflection and the organisation's 'no-blame culture' ensure that the staff can be open with each other. This learning is then translated into their practice for future activities.

Complaints and allegations are properly investigated. The manager takes prompt action to address any shortfalls, and looks at ways to improve staff practice. When a new

procedure is introduced, it is outlined in a simple flow chart making it easy for staff to follow.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has been registered at the home since May 2016. She has the necessary skills and experience, and is suitably qualified to undertake the role. She divides her time effectively between this and another short-break home, and is supported by an experienced and qualified senior staff team.

The manager is approachable and is someone who has a visual presence in the home. She provides strong leadership and oversight to make sure any practice issues are dealt with swiftly. Staff feel supported and empowered.

A comprehensive programme makes sure new recruits have a thorough induction which includes training, shadowing experienced staff and competency testing. An extensive review of performance and capability takes place during the probation period for new starters. This makes sure staff are safe and ready to take on their roles in caring for children and young people. The introduction of the staff reflection diary makes sure staff begin to adopt this reflective way of working early in their career.

The home has a team of conscientious, qualified and experienced staff, most of whom have worked at the home for many years. There are clear lines of accountability to help the staff understand their roles and responsibilities. This makes sure tasks are undertaken and documentation is kept under review and up to date.

Detailed reflective practice discussions take place during regular team meetings and supervision. Staff are open and honest with each other and share ideas, promoting consistency of practice. Staff implement learning from their training and research, keeping them child focused.

The committed manager and staff go the extra mile, and are driven by high aspirations for children and young people. The highly dedicated staff put in extra hours of planning and hard work to make events such as the music festival a huge success. They are effective in involving parents, due to the excellent relationships they have developed. This also extends to obtaining community support, which raises the home's profile.

The home's long-standing and established links with health, social care and education professionals are a consistently strong theme. This collaborative working makes sure that children and young people receive a consistent approach to their care. Professionals express a high regard for the quality of service and communication they receive from the manager and staff team. One professional said, 'Staff are approachable, friendly and communicate well with all their partners. They are responsive, flexible to new ways of working and always go that extra mile to meet need.'

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

Inspector

Tina Ruffles: social care inspector

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