

Royal Mencap Society East Fields

Inspection report

24a East Crescent
Duckmanton
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
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Website: www.mencap.org.uk

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Outstanding 

Is the service safe?

Good 

Is the service effective?

Good 

Is the service caring?

Outstanding 

Is the service responsive?

Good 

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding 

Summary of findings

Overall summary

About the service

East Fields is registered with CQC to provide respite accommodation and personal care for up to eight people. It is located in a small village on the outskirts of Chesterfield with good links to local facilities. A total of 33 people used the service at different times. There were four people accessing the service at the time of our inspection.

The service has been developed and designed in line with the principles and values that underpin Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. This ensures that people who use the service can live as full a life as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. The principles reflect the need for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to live meaningful lives that include control, choice, and independence.

People using the service receive planned and co-ordinated person-centred support that is appropriate and inclusive for them.

The outcomes for people using the service reflected the principles and values of Registering the Right Support by promoting choice and control, independence and inclusion. People's support focused on them having as many opportunities as possible for them to gain new skills and become more independent.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

People told us they were exceptionally happy with the support they received from East Fields. Relatives described the service as being 'a life line' to them and 'home from home'.

The service was passionate and committed in placing people at the heart of the service. There was an extremely strong person centred, caring and responsive ethos. People consistently told us how they were treated with exceptional kindness, compassion and respect. We saw there was an extremely positive atmosphere and engaging interaction during our visit.

We received many accounts of people's views of their support. Comments from people and relatives were, without exception, positive. They included, "They really go the extra mile, I'd would be lost without them." And, "I have every confidence in them."

The service was exceptionally well-led which was evidenced by the inspection findings. The registered manager demonstrated how their dedication and approach to supporting people provided a positive role model for all the staff.

People's needs, and wishes were fully met by staff that knew them well and were passionate about people's independence. People were respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

People received fantastic personalised care and support specific to their needs and preferences. People's needs were considered and reviewed, and changes made where improvements were needed.

People received their medicines as prescribed and were assisted to learn how to self-medicate, this took time and encouragement and staff were patiently committed to enabling people to do as much for themselves as possible. Staff were well trained, and medicines were safely managed.

People were safeguarded from the risks of abuse. Risks associated with people's care were assessed and monitored. Staff were very knowledgeable about how they kept people safe. People and relatives told us the service was safe.

Environment risks were identified and well managed.

People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible, and in their best interests. The policies and systems in the service supported this practice.

There were enough staff to meet the needs of each person. Recruitment continued to be undertaken in a safe way. Accidents and incidents were monitored and analysed.

Staff were skilled, motivated and knowledgeable. They had received appropriate training and support and were encouraged to develop their individual skills and interests. People received a balanced diet which met their individual needs and took into consideration their preferences.

People were supported by staff who were incredibly kind and caring and who maintained their dignity and privacy and treated them with utmost respect.

Feedback about the registered manager was exceptionally positive and staff felt very well supported. Staff were motivated and proud of the service and morale was very high.

People were fully involved in the service and had opportunities to give feedback.

The service applied the principles and values apply the principles and values of Registering the Right Support and other best practice guidance. These ensure that people who use the service can live as full a life as possible and achieve the best possible outcomes that include control, choice and independence.

The last rating for this service was good (published December 2016).

Why we inspected

This was a planned inspection based on the previous rating.

Follow up

We will continue to monitor information we receive about the service until we return to visit as per our re-inspection programme. If we receive any concerning information we may inspect sooner.

For more details, please see the full report which is on the CQC website at www.cqc.org.uk

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Is the service safe?

Good ●

The service was safe.

Details are in our safe findings below.

Is the service effective?

Good ●

The service was effective.

Details are in our effective findings below.

Is the service caring?

Outstanding ☆

The service was exceptionally caring.

Details are in our caring findings below.

Is the service responsive?

Good ●

The service was responsive.

Details are in our responsive findings below.

Is the service well-led?

Outstanding ☆

The service was exceptionally well-led.

Details are in our well-Led findings below.

East Fields

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (the Act) as part of our regulatory functions. We checked whether the provider was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Act. We looked at the overall quality of the service and provided a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

Inspection team

This inspection was carried out by one inspector.

Service and service type

This service is a respite service. It provides accommodation and personal care to people staying at the service for short periods of time.

The service had a manager registered with the Care Quality Commission. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of inspection

We gave the service 24 hours' notice of the inspection. This was because the service is small, and people are often out, and we wanted to be sure there would be people using the service to be able to speak with us.

What we did before inspection

We reviewed information we had received about the service since the last inspection. We sought feedback from the local authority and professionals who work with the service. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return. This is information providers are required to send us with key information about their service, what they do well, and improvements they plan to make. This information helps support our inspections. We used all this information to plan our inspection.

During the inspection

We visited the service on the 4 June 2019 to look at records relating to the service. On the 14 June 2019 we returned to the service and spoke with four people who used the service. We spoke with five members of

staff including the registered manager, and an area manager.

We reviewed a range of records. This included two people's care records and multiple medication records. We looked at two staff files in relation to recruitment and staff supervision. A variety of records relating to the management of the service, including policies and procedures were reviewed.

After the inspection

We continued to seek clarification from the relatives and professionals to validate evidence found. We spoke to seven relatives on the telephone, who gave us their experience of the service provided.

Is the service safe?

Our findings

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that people were protected from abuse and avoidable harm.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has remained the good.

Good: This meant people were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Systems and processes to safeguard people from the risk of abuse:

- People and their relatives told us they were safe at East Fields. One person said, all of the staff are kind and I do feel safe."
- We saw that staff had undertaken training to support their knowledge and understanding of how to keep people safe.
- Staff were able to describe the arrangements for reporting any allegations of abuse relating to people using the service and contact details for reporting a safeguarding concern were available.
- Staff demonstrated a clear awareness and understanding of whistleblowing procedures within the provider's organisation and in certain situations where outside agencies should be contacted with concerns. Whistleblowing allows staff to raise concerns about their service without having to identify themselves.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management:

- People were protected against identified risks. For example, there were risk assessments for mobility, choking and environmental risks. These identified the potential risks to each person and described the measures in place to manage and minimise these risks. Risk assessments had been reviewed on a regular basis.
- People were protected from risks associated with fire and electrical systems, gas systems and through regular checks and management of identified risks.
- A plan for dealing with any emergencies that may interrupt the service provided was in place.
- People had personal emergency evacuation plans. Regular fire checks took place to ensure people were safe in the event of a fire.

Staffing and recruitment:

- People were protected against the employment of unsuitable staff because robust recruitment procedures were followed. Checks had been made on relevant previous employment as well as identity and health checks. Disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks had also been carried out. DBS checks are a way that a provider can make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups.
- There were suitable and sufficient numbers of qualified consistent staff available to meet people's needs.

Using medicines safely:

- Medicines were stored, administered and disposed of safely. Each person had a medication

administration record (MAR). We found these were accurately completed and showed that people received their medicines as prescribed.

- Staff were trained to handle medicines in a safe way, completed training and received annual competency assessments.
- To ensure the safe management of people's medicines, medicine audits were regularly carried out.
- We saw people coming to use the service having their medicines booked in and checked to ensure it could be administered in a person-centred way. People were encouraged to self-administer their medicines and risk had been assessed to ensure this was done in a safe way.

Preventing and controlling infection:

- The service was immaculately clean and well maintained when we visited.
- People's relatives confirmed they also found the home clean when they visited.
- Staff had received training in food hygiene and infection control.
- There was an ample supply of personal protective equipment available and suitable and sufficient hand washing facilities.

Learning lessons when things go wrong:

- Accidents and incidents were monitored and analysed for any lessons to be learned.

When things went wrong, there was an appropriate review and action was taken to prevent it happening again.

- Accidents and incidents were monitored from a senior level to ensure lessons learnt could be shared and monitored from an organisational level.

Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that people's care, treatment and support achieved good outcomes and promoted a good quality of life, based on best available evidence.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has now remained good.

Good: This meant people's outcomes were consistently good, and people's feedback confirmed this.

Assessing people's needs and choices; delivering care in line with standards, guidance and the law:

- The service had a clear referral system used for each person accessing the respite service. This included a consent to care agreement. This helped feed into the support plans and risk assessments. Staff put together clear detailed information identifying what support each person needed when staying at East Fields.
- Plans were monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure they were current and met the needs of the person. Each person had an assigned keyworker to monitor this.
- There was a strong focus on maintaining and improving each person's skills and experiences. The service also recognised that some people came for a rest or a break away from home and therefore it was important to establish what each individual wanted from their stay.
- People and their relatives told us they were involved in all the planning around their support.

Staff support: induction, training, skills and experience:

- People and relatives told us they felt staff were able to support their care needs. A relative said, "Staff are lovely, I always feel that [my relative] is well looked after."
- All new staff had a comprehensive induction programme including face to face training in core areas, regular supervisions, shadowing experienced staff and received mentoring until confident to lone work.
- Staff training was also developed and delivered around people's individual needs.
- Staff had support in the form regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Staff were supported and encouraged to develop new skills and to progress within the organisation.

Supporting people to eat and drink enough to maintain a balanced diet

- People were fully involved with planning their meals, drink preparation, and disposal of out of date food. People were taught new cooking methods and recipes and how to cook on a budget. A person said, "The food is always good."
- Staff were very knowledgeable about people likes and dislikes and we observed menus being adapted to suit people's nutritional needs.

Staff working with other agencies to provide consistent, effective, timely care; Supporting people to live healthier lives, access healthcare services and support:

- Each person and their families had a bespoke package of respite care which had been put together initially by establishing what they are funded for and what respite pattern would be of best use to support that family. This includes frequency and duration of stay, any special events and the person's choices

and preferences.

- There was a strong focus on ensuring compatibility and flexibility for people using the service. This registered manager ensured that stays could be quickly facilitated to support people to make and maintain friendships, whilst also meeting the needs of families.
- People health needs were assessed and planned for, to make sure they received the care they needed.
- Relatives felt confident that their family member's health needs were met during their stay at East Fields. One relative said, "They communicate with me. If [my relative] is unwell they contact a doctor straight away, they know to ring for an ambulance when [my relative] has a seizure. The manager actually left their house and picked [my relative] up from the hospital and brought [relative] home for me."

Adapting service, design, decoration to meet people's needs:

- All people living at the service had been involved in the decoration and design of the service and their choices had been taken into catered for. Some people had preferred room where they stayed, and their tastes were taken into consideration. As a result, the environment reflected people's individual preferences and personalities. People and their relatives told us they liked the facilities. One person said, "I think the facilities are nice. I like to use the computer and the games room."
- The design and decoration of the service met people's needs. There was enough space for people to take part in group activities such as playing games and enough space for people to access quiet areas for times when they wanted their own space.
- The registered manager had created bespoke sensory boards so people with sensory needs who accessed the service could explore and engage with different materials, sounds, and other sensory experiences.
- Each bedroom had its own TV, so people could watch television in their rooms if they chose.
- There was ample outside space and opportunities to play basketball, football or horticulture in the service's raised beds and greenhouse.

Ensuring consent to care and treatment in line with law and guidance:

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for making particular decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental capacity to do so for themselves. The Act requires that, as far as possible, people make their own decisions and are helped to do so when needed. When they lack mental capacity to take particular decisions, any made on their behalf must be in their best interests and as least restrictive as possible.

People can only be deprived of their liberty to receive care and treatment when this is in their best interests and legally authorised under the MCA.

- Staff continued to have a good understanding of the MCA and when the principles should be applied. These principles were the starting point for all support decisions for people. Best interest decisions were in place where needed.
- People's choices were always taken into consideration. For example, people were able to administer their own medicines.

Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved people and treated them with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has now improved to outstanding.

Outstanding: This meant people were truly respected and valued as individuals; and empowered as partners in their care in an exceptional service.

Supporting people to express their views and be involved in making decisions about their care:

- People were supported to develop and maintain friendships that were important to them when they stayed at East Fields. The registered manager adjusted people's visits, so they coincided with times their friends were visiting, whilst also meeting relative's needs by adjusting times to suit them. One relative said, "[My relative] knows the people there and made a friend who has similar interests. [The registered manager] coordinates them going together. I think it feels like home, very homely."
- Since our last inspection, people had been fully involved and engaged in planning and organising a garden redevelopment project. This included holding a Mad Hatters tea party to raise money, which enabled them to purchase a greenhouse. They were able to build raised flower beds and were growing their own plants and vegetables which, they used in the meals they cooked. People were incredibly proud to tell us about the event and reported it was 'an amazing day.'
- One relative told us how they had seen a big turnaround in their relative's confidence to try new things and believed this was due to them accessing the service and staff motivating and encouraging them, which had had a positive impact on their self-esteem.
- Staff were incredibly proud of people's achievements. Staff told us, "You can see people are progressing." People had been supported to become more independent through staff encouraging and motivating them to develop and learn new skills. This had enabled them to become independent in administering their own medicines and managing their own money. One person had been supported by staff to gradually learn denominations of money and shown ways to count money which had increased their confidence and skills to enable them to safely handle their own money. Staff told one person 'they were very proud of what they had achieved'.

Ensuring people are well treated and supported; respecting equality and diversity: Respecting and promoting people's privacy, dignity and independence:

- Every staff member we spoke with showed a passion for providing outstanding outcomes for the people they supported. Staff demonstrated the values of the provider throughout the inspection, as well as understanding, and being proud of the difference they made to people's lives.
- Staff showed exceptional standards of kindness towards the people they supported, and this view was shared by the people they supported. It was clear to see there were strong relationships between people and staff. Staff were observed supporting people in a kind, compassionate and empowering way.
- People were treated as equals and were given just the right amount of support they needed. One staff

said, "Seeing people progress and come out of their shell and grow in confidence is what matters. We try to teach little skills like cooking and using the washer you can see the confidence grow in the activities we do with people. Some people use the service as a hotel and stay in bed, we respect that because it's what they want to do. I really enjoy that each shift is different."

- Without exception all the people and relatives we spoke with gave extremely positive feedback. One relative described the service as being 'a life line.' Another relative said, "[My relative] enjoys relaxing and being there with people they have made friends with. Another relative told us, "The staff are fantastic. [My relative is] absolutely safe, never any issues. It's beautiful, its everything about the place, it feels warm, it's fantastic." And, "The service is so accommodating. [My relative] loves the lounge and staff make [relative] feel so welcome. We have been using the service for years. I don't have to ring to check on [my relative] I know they are happy and well looked after."
- People had been supported to overcome their fears and anxieties, by staff who had a kind and compassionate approach. One person had previously been afraid of dogs and due to the service having regular visits from therapy dogs the person was now able to stroke the dogs without showing signs of anxiety.
- There was a very relaxed atmosphere and people were seen to be accessing the things they wanted to do and not asking for permission but doing things naturally, like it was their home.
- Staff were incredibly person centred and encouraged people to do as much for themselves as they were able to.
- We observed people being actively involved in every aspect of their support from booking in their medicines to choosing and cooking their meal.
- People were asked what activities they wanted to do and how they wanted to be involved. Some people didn't want to be involved in any activities and looked on their stay as more of a holiday to relax, whilst other people were fully involved. Their choice was privacy and dignity was respected and upheld.
- There was a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere at the service. Everyone looked to be happy and there were lots of smiling faces and people laughing and joking.
- It was clear to see people thoroughly enjoyed the time spent at East Fields. One person said, "I've been coming here ages and I love it." Another person said, "The best things about coming here are everything. I wouldn't change anything."

Is the service responsive?

Our findings

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met people's needs.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has now improved to outstanding.

Good: This meant services were tailored to meet the needs of individuals and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.

Planning personalised care to ensure people have choice and control and to meet their needs and preferences:

- Since our last inspection, staff and the registered manager had continued to significantly improve the person-centred culture and ethos within the service.
- People were fully involved in reviewing and updating their care plans. Care records were incredibly detailed and specific to the individual's needs. For example, one person's care plan provided specific details of how the person liked their room to be and even instruction on the size of the quilt they preferred.
- Staff showed an excellent understanding of people's individual needs, and how best to meet them. This was echoed in the feedback we received from family members, who told us they could not praise the skill, dedication and commitment of staff more highly. One relative said, "Staff are very kind and caring. They are all there for the people, they are very committed. Staff are very supportive and incredibly caring."
- People told us they looked at the service like a mini holiday and they thoroughly enjoyed the time they spent there. We saw photographs of a variety of different activities the service provided. People were excited to tell us about the activities that took place. For example, one person whose hobby was marvel comic characters was going to an exhibition of marvel characters which they were incredibly excited about, they were proud to show photographs from the previous year's exhibition and showed their favourite characters.
- Technology was used to enhance people's care. People were able to access computers and tablets during their stay. The service had various gaming devices and a wide selection of games that people could play. The provider had recently purchased a smart speaker which allowed people to use the interactive device to play their own music, ask questions and play games. This gave them the ability to do things independently without needing staff to assist them.

Improving care quality in response to complaints or concerns

- People and their relatives told us they would talk to the manager or one of the staff if they had a complaint.
- The manager investigated complaints. They met with or telephoned the person making the complaint and resolved them.
- The manager kept a complaints log, which showed the actions they had taken to resolve complaints.

Meeting people's communication needs:

Since 2016 onwards all organisations that provide publicly funded adult social care are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). The standard was introduced to make sure people are

given information in a way they can understand. The standard applies to all people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss and in some circumstances to their carers.

- Staff at East Fields consistently ensured information was available to people in an accessible way. They used pictures of reference with people as a way of making information easier to understand. They used simple language and illustrating the information with pictures it assisted people, particularly those with learning disabilities, to understand information more easily. Staff were seen using sign language which enabled effective communication with the person.

End of life care and support:

- The service was not supporting anyone at the end of life.
- The registered manager explained how they had discussed end of life with relatives who were elderly and still cared for their family member to ensure they could be supported by East Fields in the event of an emergency.

Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-Led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture.

At the last inspection this key question was rated as good. At this inspection this key question has now improved to outstanding.

Outstanding: This meant service leadership was exceptional and distinctive. Leaders and the service culture they created drove and improved high-quality, person-centred care.

Promoting a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering, which achieves good outcomes for people:

- The registered manager and staff exemplified that they demonstrated the providers values for there to be a world where people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to and included.
- The registered manager supported and promoted the service to continually focus on and improve the outcomes people were achieving. The registered manager was central to the quality of the service provided. They were up to date on best practice and shared learning from the provider organisation and other similar services to look at ways in which they could improve the service for people. The quality of leadership was reflected in the pride staff took in their work.
- The registered manager had found innovative ways to ensure people had access to sensory equipment. For example, they had made bespoke interactive boards as they had been too expensive to purchase. They had researched how to make them and executed them with great skill and precision. This sensory equipment gave people the opportunity to engage with a range of activities to stimulate and develop their senses.
- People's support focused on them having as many opportunities as possible for them to gain new skills and become more independent. One person had been supported to learn to cook meals from scratch. Staff had sourced easy to understand recipes that successfully supported the person to be able to follow recipes, which had built independence and self-esteem.

How the provider understands and acts on the duty of candour, which is their legal responsibility to be open and honest with people when something goes wrong:

- The registered manager was transparent and committed to delivering the best service. They also recognised the importance of learning when things went wrong and sharing that learning with others. Following our inspection, the registered manager had already started sharing their experience of the inspection to benefit other services.
- Records CQC held about the service confirmed that the provider sent in notifications as required to CQC. A notification is information about important events that the law requires the provider to notify us about such as safeguarding concerns, deaths, and serious incidents.

Managers and staff being clear about their roles, and understanding quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements; Continuous learning and improving care:

- There was a distinctive positive culture within the service, introduced by exceptional leadership and implemented by a staff team who were extremely passionate and motivated about achieving the best outcomes for people. This was clear to see throughout our inspection.
- Staff were very knowledgeable of the culture and vision of the service. This they said was because of the clear information, coaching and mentoring from the registered manager about what high-levels of care were expected. The equality and diversity values promoted within the service were to celebrate people's differences and individuality.
- Staff were clear about the expectation to provide a sustained high-quality service that met and supported people's individual needs. Staff were enthusiastic and dedicated to their work
- There was organisational oversight of the service. This included a management site visit to review the quality of the service provided.
- A programme of effective quality assurance and audits was in place. Audits gave clear actions for staff to take and where improvements were identified there was evidence that discussions took place and if necessary further training and support provided. These checks helped to sustain quality and drive improvement.

Engaging and involving people using the service, the public and staff, fully considering their equality characteristics:

- The registered manager encouraged feedback and acted on it to continuously improve the service, for example by undertaking regular reviews with people about their care and support needs. All the feedback received from relatives and people was exceptionally positive and we saw people were happy and excited to be visiting the service. This has a positive impact on people who were actively encouraged to live their lives to the full.
- To ensure the service was well led the registered manager spend as much time as possible coaching and supporting staff to develop their skills. Daily meetings and monthly team meetings took place to give the team the opportunity to reflect on what they had been doing and how they could further improve the service.
- People were seen as equal and individual's and were treated with the utmost respect. A member of staff said, "I'm very passionate about my job, I want the best for the people we support I'm always looking for opportunities to better things for people. When I find things out that are beneficial, I always bring things back to the service to tell people them. For example, I've been invited to go to Ireland to work with the employment team, this as part of my professional development. I want to engage with people with learning disabilities and help support people to get jobs. It's important to me to make a difference." Another staff member said, "I absolutely love East Field's. It gets into your heart. The people that access the service are totally amazing, we have a variety of people, their future is exciting."

Working in partnership with others:

- Staff worked in partnership with other health and social care professionals to promote and enhance people's well-being. This included working with people's general practitioners (GPs) and the Speech and Language Therapists teams.
- The service worked holistically alongside the community nursing team to support any individual whose health and wellbeing had significantly changed and supported them to undertake an assessment for signs of dementia. This led to registered manager sourcing training, which was provided to staff, through the local authority for dementia awareness. The service was successful in supporting a person with mental health issues and enabled the person to find a supported living service, which was of great benefit to their health and wellbeing.
- Staff were actively involved in a campaign to raise awareness of people's needs when attending hospital appointments. The staff positively engaged with a local hospital on the providers 'Treat me well' campaign

to transform how the NHS treats people with a learning disability in hospital. Staff said it was known the treatment people with a learning disability receive in hospital is still not good enough in many parts of the country and were passionate that this must change. They were full of enthusiasm about this campaign and passionate about advocating on people behalf. They intended to take the campaign into further healthcare settings to spread the word.

- The registered manager gave us an example of how they had worked with relatives to put emergency accommodation plans in place for relatives, which would ease the impact on the person in the event of a family bereavement.
- Relatives told us how the registered manager went above and beyond their duty to provide them with support during times of upset. They explained the registered manager had taken time out and come and personally visited them and offered them support and a listening ear. One Relative said, "[The registered manager] is on the ball. They worked very hard, if you have a problem [the registered manager] goes out of the way to help you." And, "I speak to other parents a lot and [the registered manager] is exactly the same with them, the staff at East Fields have become an extension of people's families."