

SC001531

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to seven children and young people who may have a range of emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and who may also have experienced abuse, neglect or exclusions. The staff provide care and support to children and young people who present with a range of issues, including substance misuse, attachment difficulties and challenging behaviour.

The manager registered in February 2020 and was previously the acting manager.

Visit dates: 2 to 3 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 19 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children and young people are helped to develop trusted relationships with the staff, which enables them to feel safe and secure and enjoy placement stability.

Staff help children and young people to access support from other agencies, including substance and alcohol misuse services, advocacy and the looked after children's nurse. This helps to ensure that the children and young people receive the support they need.

Staff have helped the children and young people to remain in touch with their family members and have been resourceful in how they have managed this throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that the restrictions have eased, the children and young people have resumed face-to-face family time in line with their individual plans.

Children and young people have regular key-work sessions and opportunities to share their views with staff. For example, some of the children and young people asked to develop a small allotment and grow their own vegetables, while some others have taken part in staff recruitment. This has helped to promote the children's and young people's social and emotional well-being while also developing their life skills.

Children and young people have continued to access education during the pandemic. A teacher told the inspector that they have a great working relationship with the staff, which has led to good school attendance. This means that the children and young people have continued to progress and enjoy school.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff have supported the children and young people to take part in enjoyable activities in the home and in the wider community. This has included camping trips and seaside holidays. These activities have helped to ensure that the children and young people do not feel too limited by restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

The safety of children

Individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans identify known risks to children and young people's safety and welfare. These plans are reviewed by the manager and team leaders in consultation with social workers and other agencies. This collaboration helps to better protect the children and young people.

When children and young people go missing from the home, staff follow policies and procedures and work in partnership with other agencies to help reduce the risks.

Staff have a good knowledge of the children's and young people's emotional and behavioral needs and help them to talk about their feelings. As a result, the children and young people are learning how to express themselves in an appropriate way and work with staff towards a solution.

There have been occasions when children and young people have been held by staff to keep themselves and others safe. When this occurs, the manager carries out debriefs with staff to make sure that the strategies used result in a positive outcome for the child or young person. However, these incidents are not consistently recorded. This means that important information is lost and does not enable the manager to evaluate for patterns or trends.

Leaders and managers

The manager is child focused and supports the staff in delivering consistent care to children and young people. She is committed to ensuring that children and young people have the best experience and opportunities.

The manager works in partnership with other agencies. This helps to ensure that the holistic care needs of the children and young people are met.

The manager has systems in place to monitor and review the performance of staff and the outcomes for the children and young people. However, there are times when management oversight is not consistent. For example, although they are completed, the reviews of regulation 45 monitoring reports have limited management oversight and evaluation.

The manager has had to restructure her staff team to ensure that children and young people receive consistent care. This means that on occasions the manager has worked on duty. The undertaking of additional duties has impacted the manager's ability to monitor certain aspects of work. For example, the manager has not fully scrutinised records and incident reports. This prevents her from identifying what went well and what lessons can be learned to improve practice.

Staff say they feel valued and well supported by the manager. The manager is always available to give staff clear expectations and guidance to support the children's and young people's individual needs. However, not all staff have had an annual appraisal. This does not help to enhance the personal and professional development of staff.

The manager has encountered many new challenges and when things have not gone right she has been able to reflect and respond appropriately. This has ensured that the children's and young people's care has not been impacted.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f))	26 February 2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.	26 February 2021

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))	
The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii) (c))	26 February 2021
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	26 February 2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC001531

Registered provider: Catholic Care (Diocese of Leeds)

Registered provider address: 11 North Grange Road, Leeds LS6 2BR

Responsible individual: Carol Hill

Registered manager: Tracey Burke

Inspectors

Noel Cooper, Social Care Inspector

Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector

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