

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033657
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Leeds City Council
Registered person address	Leeds City Council, Department of Education 110 Merrion Centre LEEDS LS2 8DT
Responsible individual	Stephen Banks Walker
Registered manager	Sylvia Bushby
Date of last inspection	20/01/2014

Inspection date	11/06/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Since the last inspection strong leadership and management arrangements have led to better outcomes in particular with regards to the safety of young people. Young people make good progress across most aspects of their welfare. Some young people struggle with education attendance but have made positive plans for further education after leaving school. For other young people, there is excellent attendance and substantial improvement where there has been no previous education.

Staff are committed and enthusiastic in providing the young people with a good quality of support, helping them achieve a range of positive outcomes in their lives. Safeguarding practice has improved and takes into account the different needs and vulnerabilities of young people. The frequency with which young people are absent or missing from the home has reduced significantly. Young people benefit from living in a homely and friendly environment where they have a good say in their care. One recommendation is made with regard to the promotion of e-safety with young people.

There are good management arrangements and all staff work together to implement and sustain improvements based on the individual needs and progress of all young

people at the home. As a result the manager and staff make a positive difference to young people's lives. There are two minor breaches to regulations with regard to required monitoring reports. This has not impacted on the outcomes young people experience and their welfare.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
21/08/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
24/07/2012	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	ensure the system established by this regulation improves the quality of care (Regulation 34 (1) (b))	28/08/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (3))	29/08/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure staff actively promote the welfare of children including helping them to take appropriate e-safety measures. (NMS 4.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The majority of young people make progress in developing their emotional resilience, which enables them to pursue more independent lives, keeps them safer and improves their education. Young people appropriately have taken the lead in finding more independent accommodation, searching for jobs and apprenticeships. Relationships with friends and family are more positive and previous risky behaviour involving exploitation has ceased.

Young people build good trusting relationships with staff. They benefit from the safe environment the home offers where they feel comfortable to try things out for themselves and make the transition to adulthood. For example making appointments for job interviews, looking for accommodation and managing their own healthcare. They benefit from learning skills to support their transition to adulthood. They regularly shop, cook, clean and learn a range of household tasks. They move out successfully to more independent accommodation helped by on-going support from staff to ensure a smooth transition. A social worker commented, 'Young people receive good support from staff to move on.'

Education is an area where some young people struggle with attendance however they are making positive steps to secure further educational opportunities at college or through apprenticeships. Other young people have excellent attendance, achieve well and, where there has been little education prior to admission, are making very good progress towards full time education again. Young people benefit from staff support and the connections they have with other agencies and professionals to encourage educational achievements. This support has helped young people win individual awards for their progress and contribution towards helping others.

Young people learn about healthy lifestyles from staff and other professionals such as the looked after children's nurse. Young people receive advice about a range of issues including, diets, smoking cessation, sexual health and emotional well-being. They have good access to support services and make use of counselling to promote their emotional health.

Young people make and sustain friends in the local community and also enjoy supporting local services that help more vulnerable members of society. They are able to develop their social skills, confidence and esteem from being part of their community. They also benefit from improving their contact with family members and continuing relationships with those who are important to them. One young person said, 'My visitors are welcomed into the house.'

Quality of care

good

Young people speak highly of the staff and state that the staff want the best for them. A young person said, 'Staff like me and care about me. They always want the best for me.' Staff provide young people with good quality care and are committed to developing warm caring relationships with all young people regardless of their behaviour, backgrounds, age, gender and sexuality. Staff treat all young people as individuals with their own needs and work hard to help them succeed in life. A social worker commented, 'Staff are brilliant.'

Staff implement well the individual care plans to promote young people's well-being, diversity, lifestyle choices and vulnerability. There is good attention to individual needs: for example support with education, physical and emotional health, independence, safe choices and improving behaviour. Staff evaluate and review these plans on a monthly basis. This evaluation has improved since the last inspection. Staff ensure young people's outcomes are monitored and appropriate targets are set for their development which reflects their changing needs and progress.

Young people are at the heart of care practice and have a good say in their care, daily routines, activities and menu planning; they are free to choose how to spend their time. Staff respect the young people's rights to make choices and their independence; for example young people taking responsibility for their own healthcare and appointments. Staff provide young people with consistent structure, routines and boundaries; they take time to explain why young people cannot do everything they wish. The open, honest and non-judgemental approach helps build good relationships between staff and young people. A social worker commented, 'There is lots of support for young people, even if they choose not always to accept it.'

Education is taken seriously and given a priority. Staff work with a range of education providers to provide flexible arrangements to assist young people back into education. This includes home tuition, alternative provision, individual time tables and careers advice. As young people get older, staff help them explore options for further education, helping them into college and applying for apprenticeships when they have a vocational interest.

Staff work well with the young people's parents, promoting important family relationships. One parent commented, 'Staff are good at including me in my child's care and have helped our relationship'. Staff are also proactive in taking time to develop good relationships with the young people's friends and their families. This helps young people sustain these friendships and encourages their friends and families to work with them in promoting safe outcomes.

Staff ensure that the young people are able to access a range of services to help meet their needs. For example, the looked after children's nurse, the mental health

services and the voluntary agencies that support the young people. Staff consult the therapeutic social work team regularly to further develop strategies to support young people with their complex emotional needs.

Young people enjoy a range of activities including baking, going to the local park, walking in the countryside, trips to the seaside, visits to the donkey sanctuary, going to the cinema and seeing their friends. Recently young people have started a horticultural project, growing vegetables and maintaining the garden. A young person said, 'It is good going places, gardening and making my own food.' Young people enjoy living in a well-maintained home which is pleasantly furnished and decorated providing a homely environment.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe in the home and say they feel safe. There is no physical bullying and staff are quick to respond to any form of name calling or arguments between young people. This effective action from staff helps young people feel comfortable in their home environment and confident that staff will look after them. The manager and staff respond well to any complaints raised by young people about living with each other.

There are suitable risks assessments in place identifying potential dangers to individual young people based on their backgrounds, needs and experiences. These are regularly reviewed to ensure risk reduction strategies reflect the changing needs and progress of young people. Staff knowledge of young people's need and their ability to reflect on how young people are feeling ensures that everyday care practice promotes young people's well-being and welfare.

Staff engage young people in discussion about their behaviour and personal safety but also allow them to take appropriate risks as they develop their independence. One area that is not as robustly addressed through risk management strategies is how well young people learn about e-safety. The current staffing levels, supervision of young people and their daily routines effectively limits the risks of exploitation to young people though including from internet use.

Since the last inspection staff are more proactive at keeping young people free from harm when they go out and do not return home. The manager and staff have built up relationships with friends and family of young people and are able to use these connections to locate young people. Staff frequently go and check where young people are and encourage them to return home. Where it is safe and appropriate the manager has agreed with the placing authority when young people can have overnight stays at friend's homes. This has reduced the incidence of young people being absent or missing from the home.

The use of restorative practice and positive parenting approaches establishes firm,

fair boundaries and sets clear expectations for young people about their behaviour. Staff rarely use sanctions and on occasion when this has been the case young people are included in deciding what is appropriate reparation. Success by young people in meeting agreed behavioural objectives can reduce or remove the sanction. The thoughtfulness and sensitivity of the approach by staff to supporting young people with any challenging behaviour means that physical intervention is avoided as a control measure. This contributes to a calm, peaceful and homely environment. One parent commented, 'Staff have helped my child overcome a traumatic time and transformed them into a more calm and stable person.'

All staff receive safeguarding training and are confident about the procedures to follow to protect young people if they have any concerns about their safety. This includes partnership work with social workers and if needed the local authority designated officer. Young people are further safeguarded by the recruitment procedures which ensure only suitable people are employed to work in the home. The manager has improved systems for ensuring that checks of agency staff are thorough and contribute to the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has been registered for over seven years. She is experienced and qualified to run the home. There are two competent senior staff who deputise when she is not on duty to ensure smooth continuity of management arrangements. This contributes to young people living in a thoroughly well run home. The management team has taken steps to ensure that the areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection have all been met demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement.

The staff team feel well supported by the management team and receive regular supervision which helps them fulfil their roles. Each member of staff has an individual training plan and they access regular training which covers a wide range of issues including child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, mental health and self-harm. As a result staff develop extensive skills and knowledge to support young people and help them maximise their potential. Young people's social workers speak highly of the management and staff team ability to engage young people complex needs and promote their well-being and safety. Young people's life opportunities are enhanced by their admission to this home.

The manager ensures that young people's outcomes and progress are closely monitored across all areas of their welfare. When young people are not making progress, the Registered Manager is proactive in ensuring appropriate planning meetings take place and multi-agency input occurs to address the holistic needs of individuals. This includes listening to young people's wishes and feelings, ensuring that they are central to how the home operates and how their care is planned.

There are suitable monitoring arrangements by the Registered Provider which contribute to a good identification of strengths and weaknesses of the home. These arrangements have recently been reviewed. The Registered Manager completes a quarterly report on the quality of care and progress of young people. The reports are not though rigorously evaluated as required in the regulations and they do not specifically capture how the views of young people, their parents and social workers link to improvements. However the manager is able to demonstrate the positive difference the home is having through other monitoring systems. These show that young people are consulted well and there is regular contact with parents, social workers and other stakeholders about the way care is provided.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.