

SC034953

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. The home provides care for up to five children or young people who have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been appointed since the last inspection. He is suitably qualified and has relevant experience of residential work with children and young people.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 17 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
09/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/06/2016	Full	Good
03/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)

During the inspection, one bedroom had an item of broken furniture and other rooms needed decorating.

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should:
 - Detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose
 - Detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding and health and safety and mandatory qualifications)
 - Detail the process for managing and improving poor performance
 - Detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

In particular, the workforce information should be included in one document, rather than several different documents.

- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

In particular, the information about each young person should be kept in a way that allows their current situation to be understood clearly in the context of their overall story. If information about a young person is held anywhere other than

their own file, this should be made clear.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people have made extremely good progress from their starting points. They are settled and view the home as their home. The children and young people want to stay in this home. One young person described the other people in the home as 'my family now'. Most of the children and young people know that they have made exceptional progress and are proud of their achievements.

Children and young people are settled and feel at home. They know the routines in the home and they generally keep to expectations. Children and young people recognise that their carers are people who will look after them and keep them safe. Even when children and young people are vulnerable, they know that the home is their place of safety. They are more likely to return home than if they lived elsewhere, as they know that their needs will be met.

Social workers and other professionals comment on the progress that the children and young people have made since living at the home. One professional said of a young person: 'When he arrived he was very insecure, struggled to go outside the home unaccompanied and was difficult to place in education due his anxieties. He is a changed young man now, very confident, able to share his views openly and appropriately and able to travel independently. He has developed good relationships with staff who also clearly have a lot of time for him and are very supportive of him.' This positive feedback confirms the exceptional levels of care provided to the children and young people. It also highlights the positive working relationships between the staff and the wider professional network.

Since the last inspection, one young person returned to live with his family, which was his transition from care plan. One young person has moved into the home and has settled well. No members of staff have left and only the registered manager has been appointed. This is a very settled environment, which provides the children and young people with the stability they need to feel safe and secure.

The home operates within the model of care that is outlined in the statement of purpose. Staff use a strengths-based approach with the children and young people. This includes restorative conversations rather than punitive measures. This means that the children and young people feel valued, rather than criticised, and they make sustained progress.

Most of the children and young people attend a full timetable at school every day. This is particularly good, as many of the children and young people in the home previously struggled with school attendance. Staff talk to the children and young people about

their aspirations, to encourage them to maintain their excellent progress in school. One professional said of a young person: 'He is a very bright student, and staff have been instrumental in helping him back into full-time education at a local school.' This approach to education means that children and young people have better prospects for their future than when they arrived at the home.

Staff recognise that attending education is very challenging for some children and young people. The staff work creatively with those who are not in school, to build positive relationships. The home ensures that the virtual school is involved, for example by providing individual tutoring sessions. Staff praise the children and young people for the efforts they make, no matter how small. Because of this approach, the children and young people learn that staff will not give up on them making progress with their education.

Staff encourage the children and young people to look after their physical health, including going to routine dental, optician and GP appointments. The home has excellent relationships with health professionals. When a child or young person needs extra support, staff arrange this quickly. This includes assessment by child and adolescent mental health services. Some of the children and young people receive support from the local authority therapeutic team. As well as addressing the particular needs of the children and young people, this attention to health issues reinforces the belief that staff care about them. This helps the children and young people to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Staff consult with the children and young people about how the home is run, including agreeing the menu for the coming week. Staff have meals with the children and young people and encourage them to eat healthily. The home is nicely decorated and furnished in the style of a family home. Many professionals talked about the home being warm and welcoming. Work is required in some of the bedrooms, and a recommendation about this is made.

The children and young people went on holiday abroad this year. The registered manager put in a great deal of effort to get agreement for this holiday. He believed that his children and young people deserved the same opportunity for a really good holiday as other children and young people. They had a wonderful time and still talk about this trip. They will always remember this experience and know that their home arranged something very special for them. The children and young people know that staff will do whatever is required to make sure they do not miss out on positive experiences as a result of being in residential care.

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

Children and young people are safe in this home. Most of them do not go missing from home. None of the children and young people are currently at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. Drug and alcohol use is not an issue in this home, and none of the children or young people are involved with the youth justice system. Staff undertake training to ensure that they know about the risks that the children and young people

might face, including exploitation and substance misuse. Because of their relative safety, children and young people can make progress in other areas of their lives.

Staff build positive relationships with the children and young people in their care. They ensure that they know each child or young person well, including their potential goals and any worries they have. Because of this emphasis on knowing the children and young people, staff help them find resolutions to problems without delay.

Children and young people can engage in the wider community. Three of them play in local sports teams and two are actively involved in an organisation which seeks the views of children and young people in care. All the children and young people said that if they had any problems, they could speak to any of the staff in the home. The experience of one young person who was bullied for a short time shows that children and young people can rely on staff to resolve any difficulties.

Staff provide appropriate boundaries, to ensure that the children and young people are safe. A social worker said that this had been very positive for one young person, whose attendance at school improved quickly once he moved to the home. The children and young people know that the internet is turned off at night to allow them to settle. Although they do not like this rule, they accept it without any objection. The children and young people said that staff can be strict, but that rules are usually fair.

Staff ensure that the views of the children and young people are understood by the wider professional network. The plan for one young person was a return to foster care. He wanted to stay at the home and staff ensured that his voice was heard. Eventually, his plan was changed, and he will remain at the home until he is ready for independence.

Staff focus on keeping children and young people safe. For one young person, this is challenging because of his vulnerabilities. Because of the positive relationships he is building with staff, he tends to keep in touch with the home even when he is missing. This is a significant improvement from when he first arrived at the home. All the children and young people view the home as their safe place, and they know the staff care about them a great deal. This helps improve the levels of self-esteem of the children and young people, and their level of risk reduces.

All the children and young people have risk assessments in the form of behaviour passports. These documents are reviewed regularly. The behaviour passports ensure that all staff know the specific risks that children and young people face, and how to address those risks. If a child or young person is missing, staff follow local protocols and search for them. Staff know the friends of the children and young people, so they are better able to find them if they do not come home. Staff talk to children and young people about their decision-making once they have returned home. They do this to try to prevent or reduce the likelihood of further episodes of being missing.

Physical intervention is only used when required for the safety of the child or young person who is being restrained, and that of other children and young people or staff.

Staff record all such interventions in detail. Following the incident, a staff member always has a restorative conversation with the child or young person. The aim of this is to identify a different outcome in future. The registered manager always evaluates the incident, including the impact on the child or young person.

Bullying is challenged in the home. There were a small number of incidents between two young people earlier in the year. This was dealt with quickly and there has been no repeat of this behaviour. This benefited all the children and young people in the home as it confirmed that staff care about them and will not tolerate such behaviour.

One young person is particularly vulnerable, because of his experiences before coming into care. Staff at the home are aware of the risks he faces and are vigilant about his well-being. Staff attend regular meetings about him to ensure that the home is able to meet his needs. He has made progress from his starting point, but he continues to be at risk. While he responds to nurturing care from people he trusts, he will remain at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is passionate about the children and young people and the home. He inspires his staff, who speak confidently about the way in which they look after their children and young people. All staff members believe that the children and young people in their care deserve the same opportunities as would their own children. Because of this approach, the children and young people consistently receive an excellent level of care and make progress as a result. The children and young people are settled and want to remain in the home; none of them want to be moved elsewhere.

The registered manager wants the children and young people to achieve their potential. He has systems to review their progress with key workers, to ensure that there is no drift with their plans. The registered manager contacts social workers and other professionals if any aspect of a child's or young person's plan is not being achieved. As a result of his tenacity, one young person will be assessed by child and adolescent mental health services.

Staff complete written records to ensure that the progress of the children and young people is recognised and any areas for development understood. Staff contribute to the reports for the children's and young people's reviews. Members of staff attend review meetings, as they know the children and young people best. Some of the information about the children and young people is not easy to find. A recommendation is made about the way young people's information is recorded and filed.

The model of care that the home uses is innovative and results in exceptional outcomes for the children and young people. Staff speak enthusiastically about working with the children and young people using the strengths-based approach. This is true for newer and more experienced members of staff. Staff use this approach even when a child or young person is vulnerable and still engaging in risk-taking behaviours. As a result, the

children and young people build positive relationships with staff and trust their carers to look after them.

The strength-based approach is used in staff supervision sessions and in team meetings. Staff are encouraged to think about their own development and the development of the home positively. Where change is required, this is not viewed critically. This approach mirrors the way staff work with the children and young people and helps to embed it into all aspects of the home. Children and young people benefit from the consistency of this unified style of working.

Staff undertake training, particularly on the model of care. This is essential, so that the children and young people receive consistent care from the staff. Other training is undertaken as required or made available. The registered manager keeps a record of training, to make sure that all staff complete the learning that they need for their role. A recommendation is made to introduce a workforce development plan.

The registered manager has been in post for 10 months. He has worked hard to learn about the children, the young people and the staff team. There were some early challenges, but he worked openly with the staff to resolve those issues. He deserves credit for his determination to engage his staff team to promote the interests of the children and young people. The staff team is positive about his management of the home and about its future under his leadership.

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: SC034953

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Calderdale School Effectiveness Service, 2nd Floor,
Westgate House, Westgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1PS

Responsible individual: Anne Tully

Registered manager: Wendell Allert

Inspector

Jane Titley: social care inspector

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