

SC034953

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 October 2017

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	good
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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: 9 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The young people receive exceptionally good, personalised care that is tailored to their emotional needs. This is leading to better outcomes in young people's

health and education. Their emotional resilience is also increasing.

- The staff do not give up on young people. Staff remain positive and consistent, whatever obstacles are presented. This is building a sense of belonging for the young people.
- The young people's behaviour is skilfully managed with the result that they are learning how to regulate their behaviour more effectively and make safer choices.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the model of care detailed in the statement of purpose permeates all of the care practice in the home. This leads to high-quality, consistent care, which supports the young people to overcome the challenges that they face in their lives.

The children's home's areas for development:

- It is important for the staff to undertake training in radicalisation. This will ensure that staff are alert to the signs that young people may be becoming radicalised and can take the appropriate steps to safeguard them.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/06/2016	Full	Good
03/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/11/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Secure and trusting relationships between the young people and the staff are a significant strength of this home. They form the basis from which the young people make progress, often from very challenging starting points. The young people engage with the staff because the staff invest time in listening to them and then tailor their response accordingly. A member of staff commented: 'We don't put up brick walls in relationships, we break them down.'

The leaders and managers, along with the staff team, use research relating to the psychological underpinnings of behaviour to inform care practice. They analyse the behaviour of the young people in the light of their experiences and maintain a focus on the young people's strengths. One social worker said that they were 'amazed' at the commitment shown by the staff, no matter what challenges are thrown at them. The resulting progress in the ability of the young people to regulate their own behaviour is impressive. For example, the staff have been able to identify that one young person interprets many everyday situations as rejection. Staff have put plans in place to minimise these situations and are helping the young person to cope better when these feelings arise.

Education is a priority for the staff and the strength of relationships is helping the young people to progress towards more time spent in education. Through persistent collaboration with schools and the virtual school service, the young people are stabilising their attendance. The staff have been proactive in finding placements for older young people, which combine Mathematics and English with vocational training.

Because of the perseverance of the staff, the health of the young people is improving. Direct work over several months resulted in one young person having dental work, and another attended an optician's appointment. The staff have undertaken training in sexual health and have brought in resources, such as games and condoms, to use to inform the young people.

Achievements, however small, are recognised and celebrated. The young people are involved in setting and reviewing their own goals. The staff are careful to break down goals into small, realistic steps, with a reward of the young person's choice at the end. The staff encourage the young people to persist until they succeed, even if this takes several months. As a result of this, the young people are developing persistence and ownership of their own development.

The young people receive extensive support to reconnect to their families. Several past residents have returned to live with family in the last year. The continued support that the staff give to the young people and their families has enhanced the success of these moves. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person was assisted to find his family in his country of origin and to have contact through Skype.

Regular consultation with the young people and their involvement in the life of the home promotes their self-esteem. One young person took part on the interviewing panel for the new manager. He was rightly proud of this and there are plans for him to take part

in a forthcoming job-shadowing event.

The model of care documented in the statement of purpose is evident throughout the care practice in the home. The whole staff team focuses on the strengths of the young people and there is a solution-focused approach to challenges faced along the way. A professional said: 'If all homes were like [name of home], it would be a better world for children and young people.'

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

The young people feel safe and protected in this home. They report good relationships with all the staff and can identify trusted adults to talk to about any worries.

Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and reviewed regularly. The staff understand the individual vulnerabilities relating to each young person very well. Because staff are so attuned to the way that each young person reacts, they are able to construct plans with them that identify ways to prevent or minimise risks. As a result, substance misuse and incidents of missing from home are reducing for the majority of the young people.

The staff provide firm but positive boundaries, which helps the young people to understand expectations of behaviour. This 'authoritative' parenting style reflects the model of care referred to in the statement of purpose. Because the staff are so knowledgeable about the emotional vulnerabilities of each young person, they are adept at de-escalating conflict and helping the young people to understand their feelings. The staff embrace a restorative approach to managing behaviour. One member of staff described it as feeling 'natural, because it is right'. This approach is helping the young people to develop their self-awareness and emotional resilience.

The staff team balances the need for the young people to take age-appropriate risks with keeping them safe and well. One young person has started using public transport independently, while others have 'earned' extended periods in the community by demonstrating trustworthiness in returning on time and keeping in touch.

The skills of the staff would be enhanced by training in the prevention and recognition of the signs of radicalisation, which will further protect young people.

Safe staff recruitment and employment procedures are in place. A structured induction, with identified training plans, ensures that new staff are competent in their role. Regular supervision of the whole staff team, including the manager, both supports and challenges practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been a period of management instability in the home due to difficulties in recruiting a suitably competent manager. Due to the strength of the deputy manager, the senior management support and the staff team, this has not impacted on the care and stability of the young people. A new manager has now been appointed.

The interim management team is clear about its role in respect of the young people in

its care. Staff work in partnership with other professionals and families, advocating on behalf of the young people when necessary. A foster placement has been identified for one young person, but the staff know that he is unsure about moving on. A longer introductory period has been negotiated with the young person's social worker to allow him to be better prepared and move at his own pace.

Sound and comprehensive auditing systems underpin the quality of practice in the home. Good-quality placement plans and recording of achievements are effective in monitoring and driving the progress of the young people. The good use of data identifies patterns and trends that highlight areas for development.

The views of significant people in the lives of the young people inform care experience. For example, a parent felt that he was not being kept informed about the life of his child. Steps were taken to address this and, at the next consultation, the parent rated communication as excellent.

The staff have access to a wide variety of training. Continuing professional development is valued; two senior staff are undertaking level 5 qualifications and other care staff are appropriately qualified. The consensus amongst leaders, managers and the staff is that they are a strong and cohesive team. This has ensured that the care of the young people has continued to improve during the absence of a permanent manager.

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's address: Northgate House, Halifax HX1 1UN

Responsible individual: Anne Tully

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Janet Black, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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