

SC034953

Registered provider: Calderdale Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority-run home for up to five children aged between 12 and 18 years old. Care is provided for children who need a stable placement until they can achieve independence. The home also accommodates children who are in the process of being reunited with their families or carers.

The manager has been the registered manager of the home since December 2019.

There were three children living at the home on the day of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2021	Full	Outstanding
09/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
04/12/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children living at this home are happy and settled. This is because of the positive relationships that the staff have built with the children and the nurturing care that children receive. The children living at this home have a real sense of stability and security and this helps them to make progress.

Staff understand how children's past experiences impact on their development. Staff talk to the children about their experiences on a daily basis. The staff are skilled at having open, honest and sensitive conversations with children. These discussions help children to make sense of their feelings.

Children make progress in their education from their starting points. The manager and staff advocate for children and challenge others when a child's plan is not being met. This helps children to receive the right support in school and helps them to make progress in their education.

Children are making progress in their physical and emotional health. Staff help children to access local services. Staff talk to children about topics such as substance misuse and sexual health by using interactive games or quizzes. This allows children to explore these topics with staff, which helps staff to have a better understanding of children's health needs.

Staff support children to gain the skills that are needed to live independently. Children have moved out of this home in a planned and positive way. There is an importance placed on helping children to maintain relationships with staff and peers when they have moved out of the home. This gives a very clear message to the children that staff care about them.

Children do a variety of activities that help them to enjoy their hobbies and interests such as go-karting, bowling and bike riding. The children enjoyed a holiday abroad in the summer and another child is looking forward to a skiing trip with school. Children are helped by staff to enjoy new experiences that provide them with valuable memories for the future.

The home is well decorated and homely. There are framed photographs of the children around the home and the children's bedrooms are personalised. The inspector noted that one child's bedroom is in need of repainting and an item of broken furniture has not been replaced.

Children do not always have access to all shared areas of the home. This is because the kitchen is routinely locked at night. The reason for the continued use of this practice is unclear in written documents and has not been under regular review. This blanket approach restricts children's movement and detracts from what is otherwise a homely environment.

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

Staff understand the vulnerabilities and risks to individual children. They are clear about their responsibilities and the steps to follow to mitigate some of the risks. Safeguarding practice is sound and this helps to better protect children from harm.

There is a strong plan of action in place with clear steps for staff to follow when a child is missing. Staff understand the risks to individual children when they are in the community. Staff follow the necessary steps and actively search for children in the community. Good collaborative working is in place with the police and placing social workers and this helps to reduce the risk of further harm to children.

Staff are vigilant and curious about the potential risks to children being exploited. There are strong systems in place to record a chronology of information. This is monitored and evaluated by the manager, to identify, track and review the risks to individual children.

The risks for some children have reduced. This is because the relationships between staff and children are strong. This provides children with a sense of security and trust in the adults who look after them.

Serious incidents are rare. When they do occur, staff respond appropriately and take effective action. Staff talk to children about their behaviour when they have been involved in an incident. This helps children to find alternative coping strategies to help them to manage difficult feelings and emotions.

The information about the risks to children is not always consistent or recorded clearly in written documents. The steps for staff to follow are not always clear and are sometimes ambiguous. This means that staff are not always equipped to ensure that children are better protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and suitably qualified. She is ambitious and has a clear vision for the development of the home and staff team, and understands the model of care delivered by staff. The manager is aspirational in her approach, which means that staff have a willingness to embrace the ethos of the home.

The manager knows the children well and understands their needs. She models good practice to the staff team. This helps staff to work as a team to implement firm boundaries and deliver consistent care to achieve improved outcomes for children.

Staff receive regular supervision that is reflective and focused on developing practice. Team meetings provide the opportunity for staff to talk about the children's plans and changes to the risks to children. Staff are supported by the organisation's therapeutic services to reflect on practice. This positive and supportive environment

means that morale is high and staff are committed to delivering a high standard of care.

The manager has a good understanding of the risks to children and the progress that children are making. Where there is a change to a risk for a child, or a barrier to the child making progress, the manager acts promptly to seek support from other agencies. This strong partnership working means that children receive the right support.

The manager is a strong advocate for the children. For one child, this has meant that they are looking forward to going on the school skiing trip. The manager has confidently challenged other agencies when a child's plan was not being met.

There are audit and monitoring systems in place. Records show that the manager has oversight of the progress that the children are making. However, the manager has not identified the shortfall in relation to the clarity of the information in risk assessment documents.

Children know how to make a complaint, and one child has made a complaint. The child was not clear on the complaints process, including the timescale to receive an outcome. This information is not included in the home's children's guide.

The manager has not ensured that staff have received training to meet the needs of the children living at the home. When a child who is at risk of self-harm moved into the home, the manager did not ensure that staff received training in a timely manner. This hinders staff in meeting the child's needs and has potential to place children at increased risk of harm.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))	16 January 2023
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))	16 January 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home meets children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. The registered person should ensure that the decor in a child's bedroom is maintained to a high standard and that broken furniture is replaced. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should ensure that the home's children's guide helps children to understand how to make a complaint in line with the home's complaints procedure. They should ensure that children understand how they can expect a complaint to be dealt with and the timescales for this to happen. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive the relevant training that helps them to meet the needs of the children currently living at the home, and those of any children moving into the home. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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 Council

Registered provider address: Princess Buildings, Princess Street, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1TS

Responsible individual: Guy Greenwood

Registered manager: Zoe Hygate

Inspector

Rachel Webster, Social Care Inspector

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