

# SC035154

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 owned and run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties under short-break arrangements.

**Inspection dates:** 4 to 5 September 2017

|                                                                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

|                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|

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:** 8 November 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- The children and young people are making significant progress because of exceptional intervention from the staff team. This is enhancing the life outcomes of the children and young people.
- Exceedingly strong and positive relationships are built with the children, young people and their families, with the result that real change is achieved. The outcome is that the number of the children and young people becoming looked after is significantly reduced.
- Because of the direct work undertaken by the staff, the children and young people are learning how to keep themselves safer and families are being more effective in managing these risks.
- The leaders and managers have a clear vision of the aims and standards they wish the service to achieve. They are taking effective action to progress these ambitions.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The views of the children and young people and all those involved in their lives should be collected and used as evidence on which to base the review of quality of care.
- The skills of the staff would be enhanced by training in the prevention of radicalisation of children and young people.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 08/11/2016      | Full            | Outstanding            |
| 17/05/2016      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness |
| 23/02/2016      | Full            | Good                   |
| 07/07/2015      | Full            | Requires improvement   |

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

### Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of the information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)  
In particular, gather the views of parents, social workers, health and education professionals and any other people significant in the children and young people's lives.

### Inspection judgements

#### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Because of the high-quality professional practice within this service, the outcomes for the children and young people are significantly improved. The children and young people continue to live with their own families while accessing short-stay residential support alongside holistic direct work, with the aim of securing sustainable positive change in the relationships between the children, young people and their families. The service is achieving its aims, as set out in the statement of purpose, to reduce family breakdown and prevent children and young people from entering the care system. Data demonstrates that over half of the children and young people who used this home were prevented from entering or had delayed entry into the care system as a result of intervention by the service.

The children and young people and their families are thoroughly prepared prior to their admission to the service. The staff visit them at home and formulate goals in partnership with them. This collaboration ensures that the children and young people and their families work on the things that matter most to them. This also increases the likelihood of success in reaching their goals. The actions and responsibilities of all, including the staff, are made clear so that all parties are fully engaged in the process.

This inclusive way of working is yielding positive results for the children and young people. Some of the children and young people who were previously not in education have re-engaged and are attending school again. Another young person has been able to commence attendance in mainstream education after two years in specialist provision. Breakdowns in adoption placements have been prevented and the young people who were assessed as being at high risk of child exploitation have had their risk levels reduced. One young person said that: 'My involvement here has made me the person I am today. I am no longer that other person who I didn't like.'

The manager maintains that 'it is all about relationships', and the staff team excels in building and maintaining these even when challenging the behaviour of the young people or their parents/carers. The families find them approachable and appreciate the non-judgmental approach they convey.

The children and young people have the opportunity to experience a variety of experiences through outings and activities, such as caving and hill walking. However, the manager is mindful not to undermine the ability of their own family to offer their children experiences and material goods. The manager said: 'We are here to inspire young people and their families so that hopefully they will undertake things together.' Emphasis is put on developing the social interaction and creativity of the children and young people through art, craft and music. One young person told the inspector that they don't watch television much, they play lots of board games.

The staff team is careful to ensure that all the children and young people are consulted about their day-to-day lives in the home. There are lively meetings where the children and young people can put forward their views. These are acted upon where possible. For example, one 12-year-old felt that the DVDs available in the home were now too young for him and he should be able to watch those rated above parental guidance. This was considered and a new range of DVDs was purchased.

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

Most of the children and young people who come to the service are engaging in risk-taking or challenging behaviour prior to their admission. However, through the focused and direct work by the staff with both the children and young people and their families, this reduces considerably, both inside and outside the home. The use of physical intervention is very rare and it is unusual for the children and young people to go missing. When this occurs, staff react appropriately to find them to ensure that they are kept safe.

Behaviour plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. The staff are clear about the vulnerabilities of the children and young people and the measures that are in place to protect them. The children and young people are consulted about the ways in which they would like to be helped to calm down if they become upset or angry. This results in the most effective strategies being employed to help the children and young people to regulate their behaviour.

The strong and open relationships between the children and young people and the staff team are such that the children and young people view the home as a safe haven. They are confident in talking to the staff about their concerns and problems. Because the staff maintain non-judgemental relationships with families, they are often able to mediate and help them to find a compromise. Because of this, the children and young people and their families learn to interact in a more positive way, promoting long-term emotional well-being and resilience for all.

The home holds a national award for restorative practice and this practice ethos runs

through all the interactions between the children, young people and their families. The staff find highly creative ways to help the children and young people learn how to manage their feelings, such as the use of traffic light cards to indicate their level of emotion and willingness to talk. The parents and carers are also learning how to communicate more effectively with their children.

Staff recruitment is undertaken in a thorough and safe manner. The manager has put enhanced induction procedures in place to ensure that new staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Supervision is regular and both supports and challenges the staff in their practice.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Highly dynamic leadership and management motivate the staff team to deliver a holistic, child-centred approach to the care and protection of the children and young people. It views the children and young people as the 'product not the problem'. A new manager and deputy manager have come into post since the last full inspection and they are building on the previous excellent practice in the home. They receive a good level of support and challenge from the responsible individual.

The manager has a coherent vision of the direction he wants the service to take and is focused on progressing towards these goals. For example, he has introduced journey books to help the children understand and celebrate their success towards their goals. Although the children and young people do not live in the home, he recognises that their time there may be a key moment in their lives which they will want to fully remember.

Partnerships with the families and other professionals are key to the success of the intervention offered by the home. The staff team works very closely with social workers. Social workers hold the service in high regard for its flexibility and expertise in family support. While the interface between the services offered and other family intervention services is evolving, the manager is confidently driving effective collaboration.

Monitoring and review systems are comprehensive; the voice of the children and young people is especially strong. The manager is starting to collect the views of others more systematically. The six-monthly review of care report would be more informative if the views of the children and young people and those in contact with the service were reflected within it. A recommendation in respect of this is made.

The staff team members hold or are working towards appropriate qualifications. They have a wide range of experiences and skills in working with children and young people. The versatility of staff is demonstrated in the range of resources they use in their direct work with the children and young people and their families. The staff team has access to a wide variety of training, such as child sexual exploitation, equality and diversity and safeguarding. The knowledge and skills of staff would be enhanced by undertaking training in the prevention of radicalisation of children and young people.

The staff team has taken part in team-building exercises, which have been very effective

in building team morale and enhancing communication in a time of change. Because of skilful management by the leadership team, the service continues to improve the lives of the children and young people.

## **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:** SC035154

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Northgate House, Halifax HX1 1UN

**Responsible individual:** Anne Tully

**Registered manager:** Aaron McLoughlin

## Inspector

Janet Black, social care inspector

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