

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC035155
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Northgate House, Northgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 1UN

Responsible individual	Gary Pickles
Registered manager	Jane Stanley
Inspector	Stella Henderson

Inspection date	14/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC035155

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The home more than fulfils the objectives in its Statement of Purpose to provide a high quality short break service in an atmosphere of, 'love, laughter and learning.'
- There is a strong safeguarding culture and parents are reassured that their children are safe here. Families and professionals have confidence in the home to meet the complex needs of their children and young people.
- Every aspect of the service is exclusively focused on the diverse and extremely complex needs of children and young people. This has enabled each and every one of them to make tangible progress from their starting points.
- Management, leadership and monitoring are all highly effective in driving forward improvement. The manager and staff work closely as a team and continually look for new and innovative ways to make life better for children and young people.

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

Recommendations

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

- The information set out in the Statement of Purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.6) Specifically, amend the Statement of Purpose to ensure all points of Schedule 1 are fully addressed.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority short break children's home. It is registered to provide short breaks for up to six children with physical and learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/10/2014	Full	Good
13/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
21/06/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Children and young people who visit this home for their short breaks are cherished. They are valued as individuals and each in their own unique way achieves an enormous amount during their short breaks. They enjoy experiences that really enrich their lives, try out new ventures and build on their existing abilities. Achievements vary depending on children and young peoples' complex needs, preferences and wishes. For one young person it is increasing the 'now and next' prompts from one to five stages. For others it has meant greater eye contact or walking further on each visit. Young people with less severe disabilities succeed in learning how to prepare and cook food, cultivate plants in the new garden area and participate in fund-raising. Activities in the community range from going out for walks, to visits to fire stations and theme parks. Older children have participated in the local authority's 'Take Over Day', where they managed the home for the day and attended meetings with senior management. Young people have also had their art work exhibited. For some young people, the complexity of their needs means that they must follow a strict regime of medication, feeding and observation. The manager and staff have been creative in thinking about how these young people can also enjoy new experiences despite these additional limitations. All these accomplishments are pursued in an atmosphere of fun, laughter and celebration of life. This is only possible however because of the delivery by staff of highly focused planning and support for children and young people. Parents notice the difference that the home makes for their children. One parent said that staff helped her child to walk more and use her wheelchair less. A foster carer commented on the improvement made for her foster child, 'especially with her emotions – the home has made a real difference with this. They have come up with a lot of ideas to help her communicate her emotions, which has also helped us.' Staff express real delight in meeting children and young people when they arrive for their short breaks. Careful assessment and planning goes into ensuring that these breaks are right for children and young people and remain right for them. For example, day care was re-introduced for one young person when she became unhappy with overnight stays. Matching is also an important element in ensuring	

the right mix of children and young people, in terms of their friendships and complexity of their needs.

Children and young people are well-prepared for their visits. Families know their children best and are fully engaged in this process, contributing to the child's 'Tell us the story of your life so far' document. This helps staff understand children's health and personal care needs and how they communicate.

Information gathering at this early stage, together with close liaison with schools and health services, ensures children receive a bespoke and seamless service suited to their individual needs. Support, planning and preparation is equally effective in helping young people to transfer to adult services. They end their short breaks with a celebration and a photo-journal of their experiences and achievements.

Staff excel in helping children and young people develop their methods of communication and to find what works best for them. For example, one young person has been supported to recognise a much greater number and range of pictorial images. One parent said, 'I would never have thought that so much development could have been achieved my son.'

Children and young people receive their short breaks in a home that is purpose built for children with disabilities. As such it has all the required equipment to protect their safety and well-being as well as that of staff.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The quality of safeguarding practice is excellent. Parents are confident that their children are safe here. A parent commented, 'My son is very happy here, he's in very safe hands. He is more relaxed now in his routine, and he's not on one-to-one staffing because the risks have reduced.' High levels of supervision means that children and young people are not able to leave the home unaccompanied. Effective security arrangements and health and safety checks keep them safe within the home. There is a heightened level of vigilance because children and young people cannot always communicate if they are hurting or have been hurt. Staff are alert to changes in behaviour or mood in children and young people that may give rise to concern and further investigation.	

Staff are very effective at managing the high levels of medical risk of those with more complex disabilities. Extremely good work is undertaken with nursing staff and parents whose children have life limiting conditions. Staff implement the appropriate medical protocols but understand the boundaries of what constitutes nursing care.

Children and young people know how to complain and exercise that right when they feel the need to. No matter how minor, these are taken seriously, fully investigated and resolved in a timely manner. This reinforces the fact that their opinions matter.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The Registered Manager has been in charge of this short break service since 2013. She has a level 4 management qualification and provides strong leadership and robust governance. She is strongly supported by senior management who take an active interest in the home. What characterises this home as outstanding is the manager and staff's constant pursuit of excellence. They are a team who always want to do more and understand more in order to help children and young people increase their independence, learning and experiences. In this way, the home more than fulfils its Statement of Purpose to provide short breaks in an atmosphere of 'love, laughter and learning.' Training, research, creative thinking and strong partnership working is key to fulfilling the ambitions of the Statement of Purpose. It underpins the work of staff as they seek to find out more about the nature of children and young people's complex disabilities. They test what will work best for them and adapt their practice accordingly. For example, the service helps to facilitate contact between birth parents and children. When this proved difficult for one young person, a member of staff took along her dog. This provided a useful diversion and helped take the pressure of the contact visit away from both the parent and young person. Staff have undertaken specialist training from the National Autistic Society, on sensory therapy and managing life-limiting conditions. They effectively apply their learning to their day-to-day work with children and young people. Serious case reviews have been explored for any learning points that may relate to children with a disability. Social media and electronic technology are also put to excellent use	

both as research tools and as a means of providing tips and techniques on practice.

The manager and staff are held in high regard by parents and professionals. One parent described staff as, 'very competent, very professional.' Another said, 'I don't know if we'd have stayed together as a family without the help of staff.'

Feedback from an external agency found that the support and guidance from staff was, 'invaluable in terms of tailoring our service to meet the young person's specific needs.....you really went out of your way to impart your knowledge and understanding of him to us...our staff came away with a renewed outlook and made positive comments about the whole session'.

The home fulfils its objective to provide a service which promotes social inclusion; in practice this is an area of exceptional strength. The widest possible view is taken of this concept by both the home and the local authority as a corporate parent.

The manager makes sure that the home is a visible presence in the community with children and young people participating in a host of community events. The building itself is made available to children with disability not receiving a short break service now, but who may do so in the future. The provider also fulfils its wider obligation as a corporate parent by providing volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities to young people who used to be in the care of the local authority.

Highly effective monitoring looks at both overall performance of the service and the detail of the quality of care experienced by each individual. For example, monitoring of progress and outcomes is now firmly established; when new things have been tried and tested, there is a short assessment of, 'what we learned from this.'

At a strategic level, monitoring has led to actions to address workforce performance issues. This has resulted in the remaining staff being more motivated, leading to better outcomes for children and young people and better use of resources.

The Statement of Purpose is under review. The new format does not quite capture all the elements of Schedule 1. This has no impact on children and young people but should be corrected in order to maintain compliance with the Children's Homes Regulations.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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