

Inspection report for children's home

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC035155         |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Stella Henderson |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full             |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home  |

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registered person</b>         | Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council                     |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | Northgate House Northgate Halifax West<br>Yorkshire HX1 1UN |
| <b>Responsible individual</b>    | Gary Pickles                                                |
| <b>Registered manager</b>        | Jane Elizabeth Monica Stanley                               |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b>   | 13/02/2014                                                  |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 15/10/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

|                                          |               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Previous inspection                      | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | none          |

|                                        |             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>This inspection</b>                 |             |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>           | <b>good</b> |
| Outcomes for children and young people | good        |
| Quality of care                        | outstanding |
| Keeping children and young people safe | outstanding |
| Leadership and management              | outstanding |

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|

This short break service is good with outstanding features. Professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication, along with a sense of playfulness, are the hallmarks of a dedicated staff team. This helps children and young people enjoy their time at the home and get the most out of the opportunities on offer. Children and young people enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. They are secure in their surroundings, feel safe and consequently are happy.

Children and young people take the lead in deciding how to spend their time during their short breaks. Staff are creative in seeking these views through a variety of communication methods. Staff have high aspirations for children and young people in terms of equal access to opportunities and challenging any barriers to participation and inclusion. This contributes to children and young people enjoying an outstanding quality of care.

Leadership and management of the home are outstanding. The manager draws upon monitoring systems, the views of young people, their parents and professionals to raise standards. Two requirements are set to further improve practice. These relate to administrative amendments that have no adverse impact on outcomes for young people.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to offer a short breaks service to children and young people. Young people using the service have learning disabilities and many also have physical disabilities.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 13/02/2014      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 21/06/2013      | Full            | good                 |
| 31/10/2012      | Interim         | inadequate progress  |
| 30/05/2012      | Full            | adequate             |

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

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Reg.      | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                          | Due date   |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4 (2001)  | ensure that the children's guide includes a summary of the complaints procedure established under regulation 24 (Regulation 4)(3)(b)                                                                 | 17/11/2014 |
| 22 (2001) | revise the policy for the use of electronic monitoring devices. This is with reference to ensuring agreements for these measures are specific to young people's individual needs. (Regulation 22)(1) | 17/11/2014 |

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people enjoy rest, recreation and a wide range of new experiences and learning opportunities during their short breaks. Everything on offer is designed to meet the complex needs of the children and young people, their individual choices and the expressed wishes of parents. One parent noted their child, 'is very well looked after' at the home.

Children and young people are cared for with genuine warmth, affection and respect. They experience a seamless service because staff work very closely with parents, carers and health and education professionals. Children and young people respond positively to this continuity of care and predictability in routine. This helps to reduce anxiety, promotes their emotional stability and enables them to make measureable progress.

For some children and young people the 'distance travelled' is small but nonetheless significant. For example, some have learned to manage more of their personal care, others have shown more willingness to share with others or try new food. However a professional noted that staff do 'push expectations' of what children and young people can achieve. This had resulted in 'great improvements' for one young person in their 'ability to learn and independence skills.'

Parents and carers retain primary responsibility for their children's health and education but these needs are very well supported during short break stays. A professional noted the, 'fantastic support and contribution' for one young person in their education and wider learning. Several parents also commented positively on the home's highly effective cooperation with school programmes.

One of the strengths of the home is the way in which staff continually look for new ways to improve communication with children and young people. A wide range of different methods are very successfully employed, from simple 'yes' and 'no' boards to new technology. This helps children and young people have a say in how they want to be cared for and which activities they would like to do. This in turn leads to more effective consultation and involvement in decision-making. One parent noted that their child, 'is given a choice and staff work very hard to ensure this.'

Children and young people are included in the day to day running of the home. Those who are able will assist in preparing meals, push the food trolley and clear the table. Mealtimes are social occasions at which children and young people are encouraged to interact with each other and to help each other out where they are able. This helps them to develop some independence skills but also to feel that their contribution is valued.

## **Quality of care**

## **outstanding**

Children and young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. During their short breaks they benefit from a fun and playful atmosphere created by very skilled and highly motivated team. Children and young people enjoy an excellent range of activities in home and in the community. They are actively involved in making choices about places to visit and meaningful things to do. This has included taking part in the 'scarecrow' contest, using a climbing wall and swimming. However if they choose to do so, children and young people can spend their time relaxing in the home. Risk associated with any activities is under constant evaluation. Planning and coordination of such events is excellent. Staff constantly review the composition of groups of children and young people to ensure that activities are safe and appropriate.

Staff have created exceptionally strong and effective partnerships with external agencies and parents to ensure that short breaks are well-coordinated. Staff know each child and their family extremely well and planning is based on careful consultation with parents and other professionals.

Copies of short break plans are given to parents to check for accuracy and amendment. This ensures that plans and intervention is successfully adapted to each individual child's complex needs. This also helps to ensure that children and young people are well matched during their short break.

The complex needs and associated behaviours of children and young people are very well understood. This is because there is excellent liaison with parents and school on this matter, in-depth assessment and close observation and analysis of children and young people. One parent noted that staff use strategies that, 'replicate the strategies we use at home and school.'

As a result behaviour is managed extremely well. Due to their comprehensive knowledge of young people, staff are able to anticipate triggers, react to any changes in behaviour and provide immediate positive support. This helps to create a calm and harmonious atmosphere in the home.

Medication is managed effectively and there is a robust handover system to ensure safety when receiving and returning medication between home, school and the short break service. The administration and storage of medication is based on highly effective planning, checking, auditing and advice from experts. There are additional checks on the storage and dispensing of medication by the Medicines Governance

Service. This independent scrutiny provides an additional safeguarding check to the process.

Children and young people enjoy very good quality accommodation with an excellent range of resources, such as a sensory room, a huge garden with play equipment and games, toys, books and films. The environment is very well maintained and feels and looks cheerful, bright and child friendly.

Appropriate and agreed surveillance measures protect young people who may be at risk from aspects of their own behaviour. The policy could be improved to reflect the very specific circumstances in which young people need this additional protection.

### **Keeping children and young people safe**   **outstanding**

Children and young people are safe at the home. They feel secure in the home due to well established routines and by being looked after by staff who are familiar to them. Parents feel their children are kept very safe when staying in this home and trust the staff with the care of their children

Staff are exceptionally effective in providing a nurturing, stable and safe environment. They are knowledgeable about how to protect children and young people with complex needs. Safeguarding practice is constantly updated through team discussion, reflection and training.

All members of the team are very aware of young people's individual vulnerabilities and are confident in following safeguarding and protection processes. Welfare concerns are responded to promptly and effectively. One parent commented on the 'appropriate and immediate' response to a concern about a specific element of their child's short break care.

One of the positive changes in staff practice is the willingness to be less risk averse. Potential risks are still rigorously assessed, but the approach has changed. The team does not let risk create barriers to children and young people's participation in activities and within the community. Staff ask 'is there a way we could do this safely?' This has enabled children and young people to get the best possible experiences from their short break.

The risk of children and young people going missing is minimised by high levels of staff supervision. They are safeguarded by a staff team who are very vigilant and proactive in implementing preventative measures.

The management and staff team have a very robust approach to health and safety. This has led to a reduction in minor mishaps and accidents. The buildings are safely maintained. Regular checks and tests of fire safety equipment and systems promote

a safe environment. Individual arrangements ensure that each child and young person has a plan so staff know how to support them in the event of a fire or emergency.

## **Leadership and management**

## **outstanding**

The very experienced manager is a qualified social worker and has appropriate management qualifications. She presides over a short break service that is highly regarded by parents and professionals. The manager has cultivated a 'can do' attitude and a management approach that is open to the ideas and suggestions of staff. Professionals and parents comment on the home's excellent focus on working in partnership with themselves, their children and other professionals. One professional said, 'it's very satisfying to be part of this team.' A parent commented that the quality of communication and professionalism of the team was, 'absolutely fantastic.' Another parent listed the improvements in the home, including a better environment, more shared objectives, increased empowerment of young people and a greater focus on activities.

Senior staff are well qualified, experienced and encouraged to undertake further qualifications such as the Level 5 management award. All staff members have gained an excellent level of training and good qualifications that enable them to provide the best possible care. New staff have found the induction and ways of working in the home 'completely child focused.' A culture of continuous learning and reflective practice development ensures that the often dynamic and complex needs of children and young people are understood and responded to.

The manager and senior practitioners have very robust oversight of the service. This is supplemented by external scrutiny of the home, including oversight by local councillors. This helps drive up improvement and makes sure children and young people receive the service described in the home's Statement of Purpose.

Children and young people's unique personality, characteristics and needs are captured in records that are of good quality. Photographs are used to illustrate their day to day activities and achievements.

A requirement is set to amend the children's guide to include a summary of the home's complaints procedure. This is available to them in another document, so has no adverse impact on them. However it would provide them with this summary in just one handy format which would make it easier for them to see and understand.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Judgement   | Description                                                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding | A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Good        | A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.                      |
| Adequate    | A service that only meets minimum requirements.                                   |
| Inadequate  | A service that does not meet minimum requirements.                                |

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.