

SC035155

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 operated by a local authority. It provides overnight breaks for up to five children at any one time, with physical and/or learning disabilities.

At the time of the inspection 25 children were having a maximum of 74 overnight breaks per year. On the date the inspector visited, two children were staying overnight.

The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager who registered at this home with Ofsted in 2013.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2024

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	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 28 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2023	Full	Outstanding
26/10/2021	Full	Outstanding
17/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
22/05/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are provided with frequent opportunities to have a wide variety of exciting new experiences and to go to new places. Stimulating activities include 'back garden camping', visits to public events and participation in clubs. This helps children to be a visible presence in the area and feel part of the community.

Careful planning of the mix of children for overnight stays results in friendships being formed and sustained. This is also effective in preventing incidents or conflicts.

Children receive highly individualised care that takes account of their vulnerabilities and specific needs. The home has built up a collection of personal toys and other possessions for each child, so they can enjoy familiar items that reflect their interests and choices. This helps to make them feel settled during their stays.

Staff know children well, which means they understand how to support them to make progress. Children become more independent in managing essential tasks like dressing themselves. They become more confident, and sensitive reassurance helps them overcome anxieties and fears.

Staff consistently build effective relationships with children's families and other professionals involved in their care. The managers and staff are held in high regard. One parent said about staff, 'They are different here at this home; they are so, so good.' Another parent said, 'They treat me as a person, not just a parent.' This promotes resilience in children's families.

Children were observed to be happy and settled in the home. Many children who use the service are unable to communicate verbally and rely on a familiar adult to understand and meet their needs. Staff excel at this. There is effective liaison with families and health services, which promotes consistency across settings.

The home is currently undergoing a programme of refurbishment, and areas where this has not yet started are showing signs of wear and tear. The work already started is to a good standard, and this bodes well for the finished condition.

Moves on from the home are well planned. Staff work with families and with new providers where possible to promote consistency. Staff minimise the impact of moving on by preparing parents and exploring multiple options.

Staff share the ethos that the service is not just to provide families with a break from care; it is also to provide children with a fun and relaxing time built around their different needs.

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

Staff understand children's vulnerabilities. The ratio of staff to children increases in line with levels of need, so that children are not exposed to risk. Many children who use the service have little or no awareness of danger, but where they do have some understanding, staff work skilfully to give them strategies to make themselves safer.

Staff work alongside parents and health professionals to agree on how to support children's behaviour effectively. Staff recognise that some children have been impacted by early life trauma, and leaders and managers have reinforced staff understanding by offering specialist training. This helps staff identify how this can impact children and be expressed through behaviours, especially where children experience barriers to verbal communication. Staff keep this awareness at the forefront of their work and can therefore identify potential causes of escalating or changing behaviours.

Medication regimes are complex for some of the children, and they play a vital role in keeping children stable and well. Some children require their medication to be administered covertly, which is endorsed and supported by medics. This could be better recorded and monitored to ensure staff can be confident in the suitability of this method of administration.

There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home and no notifications of serious events to the regulator since the last inspection. This shows that there has been stability for children while staying in the home.

When children are at risk in their family situation, staff safeguard them effectively through multi-agency collaboration. Staff regularly exchange information with social workers to ensure there is a thorough understanding of emerging risks and how to manage them.

Since the last inspection, there have been very few occasions when it has been necessary to hold children to keep them safe. This has been used as a last resort. These incidents are well recorded, which shows staff have thoroughly explored why it was necessary to hold the child. If appropriate, plans and strategies are amended. However, on at least one occasion, staff have held a child and reviewed the incident afterwards without seeing the need to complete the associated paperwork. This misses an opportunity to fully track children's behaviour.

On arrival at the home, one bedroom was fitted with an external bolt. The bolt had been in situ for over two months, although staff advise it had not been used. This breaches children's right to be able to leave their bedroom if they wish.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the children and the service. They drive a culture of continuous improvement. Regular parents' group meetings and

social media networks support families to offer and receive peer support. This recognises the importance of taking an inclusive approach to working with children and families.

Leaders and managers ensure that training for staff is focused on the individual children. This means that care, especially health-related care, is delivered safely and consistently.

Supervision sessions are delivered reliably, which means there are regular opportunities to check out staff's understanding. This builds a resilient team of staff who feel supported in their work.

Leaders and managers actively promote an open, tolerant and diverse culture. They focus on what children can achieve rather than what they cannot. They are committed to overcoming barriers to inclusivity. For example, they will increase staff numbers to enable children to safely attend public events.

One parent commented that staff have taken her child out to places where she would feel uncomfortable taking them for fear of being judged. Managers do not let the risk of being judged prevent children from having a full and fulfilling range of experiences.

Leaders and managers are held in high regard by professionals. They have cultivated effective collaborative partnerships with professionals. One described them as 'family-centred, equitable and professional'. This management culture supports the delivery of life-enhancing care for children and excellent support for the staff team.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet The Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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)(iii)(iv))	30 April 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused, or details of the authority to administer medication covertly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand that physical intervention also includes restricting a child's liberty of movement. This includes, for example, changes to the physical environment of the home (such as using high door handles), and removal of physical aids (such as turning off a child's electric wheelchair). Restrictions such as these, and all other restrictions of liberty of movement, should be recorded as a physical intervention. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42)

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: SC035155

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Provider name: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Guy Greenwood

Registered manager: Jane Stanley

Inspector

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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