

SC035155

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short-break services for children and young people, during the day and overnight, from the ages of four to 17. The home provides the service for children and young people who have moderate to severe learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, complex health needs and/or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (where there is also a learning disability). The service can provide assistance, in conjunction with behavioural support staff, for family assessments and directly participates in intensive behavioural support programmes with specific families.

The manager of the home has been registered with Ofsted at this home since May 2013. The manager has a wealth of experience in caring for children and young people, and has the appropriate qualifications.

Inspection dates: 22 to 23 May 2018

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	outstanding
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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: 24 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2017	Full	Good
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
12/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Staff must also be familiar with information sharing requirements relating to the children they care for. They should have access to the information sharing policy and procedures specified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) for the area where the home is located. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.7)

This is with particular regard to ensuring that the home's social media page is compliant with the relevant policies and procedures.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people who access this service are provided with a warm, safe and stimulating environment where they flourish and thrive in the care of a highly experienced, competent and incredibly dedicated staff team. One parent said, 'There is an energy about the staff, and they are a positive and caring bunch. I don't know how or why they do it, but they are fantastic, and they love it.'

The staff work creatively to provide a wide variety of experiences that are tailored to the individual needs of the children in the home and in the community. The children and young people have access to a sensory room, soft play and garden music room during their stay. The home is a bright and colourful, well-equipped haven, with sensory toys and resources to suit all ages and cognitive abilities.

The children and young people who have complex disabilities and care needs have regular access to amenities in the community. The staff take the children and young people on outings to provide experiences that many of them are ordinarily unable to access. These experiences include a ride on a steam train, a trip to a safari park and water-based sporting activities with appropriate adaptations to allow wheelchair access.

The team of staff bring their own individual creative talents and interests into the home to promote positive and creative experiences and progression for children. One member of staff is a qualified art therapist, and plans and promotes creativity and craft activities among the staff team. Another member of staff has an interest in sports, and is leading a group of young people through a range of outdoor activities to achieve their Duke of Edinburgh award.

The staff help the children and young people to achieve individualised goals that are centred on gaining greater independence, broadening their experiences and socialising with others. The staff use the strength of their relationships with the children and young people to gain trust and encourage development and participation in new experiences. The children and young people have made exceptional progress in improving sleep patterns, and have increasing independence in toileting and self-care routines. One parent said, 'The team strives always to meet (the young person's) needs but actively to support his development.'

Many of the children who stay at the home have limited ability to verbalise their wishes and feelings. Two members of staff have worked creatively with parents and education professionals to develop individual communication boxes for each child. These contain resources that aid communication and encourage engagement, and provide reassurance as they include objects and items that are familiar to the children. The children and young people have made outstanding progress in demonstrating an increased ability to verbalise and use pictorial methods to express themselves.

The children, young people and their families are well prepared for transitions, because of the efforts of the staff team. On admission to the service, every family is provided with a welcome pack which provides information about the home and how to complain, and a guide for children. One parent said, 'It was fantastic to allow the whole family to visit, and very comforting.' One social worker said, 'I would particularly like to comment on the excellent support around transition. They were very person centred in supporting the planning, in the hope that (the young person) will have a calm, successful transition.'

Research-based practice is embedded throughout the home. The staff follow a model of care known as gentle teaching, which incorporates other research-based principles, such as systemic, restorative and reflective practice.

Parents and partners are highly complimentary of the staff and the service. One parent said, 'It is very evident that each of them really care about the children they look after.' Another parent said, 'They have the patience of saints. It's a brilliant place.' One social worker said, 'All of my children who attend have positive experiences and can't wait to return.'

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

The children and young people who present with challenging behaviour have been helped to regulate their emotions and reduce their levels of anxiety and distress. This has resulted in some of the children and young people having increased opportunity to access community resources.

The staff have found innovative and new ways to help the children and young people to regulate their behaviour. One child was expressing frustration through aggressive behaviour. The staff implemented techniques to distract and dissuade him from this behaviour. They have worked closely with families and education staff to promote consistency in approach, resulting in sustained improvement. While staying at the home, another child has reduced the level of anxiety that he experiences. The staff offer close hugs, in agreement with parents, and this has reduced the instances of self-injurious behaviour.

One parent said, '(A member of staff) helped make a new behavioural plan and visited (the young person) at home for five days to help us achieve the results, and it was surprisingly amazing to see some very positive changes in his behaviour.'

On occasion, physical intervention has been necessary to prevent self-injurious behaviour or to keep the children and young people safe in the community. Those incidents have been comprehensively recorded, debriefed with staff and parents and evaluated to ensure that any learning for staff is implemented.

There have been no serious incidents, safeguarding matters or allegations since the last inspection. One complaint was made regarding a comment made by a member of staff to another professional. This was a misunderstanding that was resolved swiftly and did not jeopardise the excellent working relationships with other services.

Supervision levels agreed with social workers and families are high, due to the significant care needs of the children and young people. Medication arrangements are stringent and safe. Personal care is delivered with sensitivity, and the dignity of the child or young person is respected and prioritised.

The physical environment in the home is risk assessed regularly and is well maintained. All manual handling equipment is serviced frequently. Appropriate consideration is given to fire safety, and regular drills are conducted to ensure that the staff, children and young people are familiar with the evacuation procedure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager and deputy manager work as a cohesive and effective partnership to lead a large staff team. The staff, parents and other professionals speak extremely highly of the leadership and staff team. The passion and dedication of all the staff at this home are abundantly clear.

Leaders are exceptional role models who have created in the home a positive and open culture that supports continuous improvement and development. They are held in very high regard by the staff. One member of staff said, 'The biggest thing they have done is to value people, to allow us as a team to grow in confidence, and we have done that. It is a fantastic place to work.' Another staff member said, 'I fell in love with this place as soon as I came through the door. I got so much help and guidance.'

Leaders and staff work in partnership with families. Parents have an opportunity to influence the delivery of the service through regular consultation and the development of a parents' forum. For parents who find the additional time commitment difficult, the service has a social media presence which maximises the involvement and participation of families. One parent said, 'This group of people likes to make things happen.' A good practice recommendation is made to ensure that this social media function is fully compliant with the organisation's social media and information-sharing policy.

On occasion, leaders and staff use their own time to become involved with other activities that support the aims of the service, such as fundraising and community events. Leaders collaborate with community groups and the parents' forum to make the best possible use of resources and to raise funds for equipment and activities. This approach has meant that financial constraints do not impact negatively on the children and young people.

Every year the service closes to children and young people for one week. The entire staff team is provided with mandatory training and further extensive and varied development opportunities to improve the practice in the home. The staff team has recently undertaken additional training in offering sensory story experiences and expression through art and craft and play techniques. During training activities, the staff are encouraged to practise hoisting and feeding each other to hone their practice and to promote empathy and a deeper understanding of how the children and young people

might experience these aspects of care giving.

The children and young people experience very well-planned and managed care, with clearly defined goals to assist them to progress in their development. There is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate that the efforts of the staff team, led by a competent leadership team, have resulted in considerable and sustained improvement to the lives of the children and young people in this home and in their own homes.

Since the last inspection, leaders have implemented a new auditing system to ensure that all care planning documentation is checked monthly and updated if required. Leaders have shown a great capacity for inviting constructive comments from partners and parents and responding appropriately. One parent said, 'They tailor communications about each child's stay to meet the needs of individual parents' desires and requirements. How fantastic!'

Professionals have provided highly positive feedback about the service. One social worker said, 'I feel that the way in which the staff at (the home) communicate with families and allied professionals is exceptionally good.' Another said, '(The home) is such a friendly and welcoming place, and the staff are very committed to the children and work very well in partnership with our team across all disciplines.'

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 difference 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: SC035155

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: Jane Stanley

Inspector

Nicola Thomas, social care inspector

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