

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-breaks services for children, during the day and overnight, from the ages of four to 17. The home provides a service for children who may 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 registered with Ofsted in July 2013.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 October 2021

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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Date of last inspection: 17 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
22/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/10/2017	Full	Good
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit from highly individualised care and support. Before commencing placement, the manager liaises with parents/carers, social workers and teaching staff to gain a good overview of the individual needs of the child. Staff from the home visit the children at their home and within their school setting. This comprehensive planning contributes to continuity of care and support, while developing positive relationships. Wherever possible, and if it is in the child's best interests, introductory visits to the home are arranged, before an overnight stay. Children are provided with welcome booklets with photos and pictures to provide further information and reassurance.

Transition planning for older children moving on to adult services is a further strength of the service. The staff from the home liaise and work with adult care providers to make sure that the transition from children's services to adult services is seamless. This comprehensive planning and support are greatly appreciated by parents whose children have recently moved on to adult services. One parent said: 'I cannot praise the manager and staff highly enough. The support they gave to our son as well as to us as a family was excellent. They know his care needs so well and made sure their knowledge was passed on to his new carers. This was of great benefit to him.'

The home has a dedicated and established staff team. Most of the staff have worked at the home for several years. They provide excellent care and support to the children. Staff use their skills and knowledge to build strong and positive relationships with children. Staff make sure that they know the individual communication methods of each child, including speech, sign language, objects of reference and pictorial systems. This means that each child is supported to communicate their wishes and feelings.

Children take part in a wide range of activities. These link with their individual plans and offer a wide range of experiences. For example, during the summer holidays, staff supported children to experience camping within the grounds of the home and take part in arranged festivals. Trips out in the minibus help some children to overcome their anxieties of travel, which enables them to access different activities while on a short break and with their parents and carers.

Children's progress is celebrated and recorded. One parent commented: 'My child eats and sleeps far better than she did previously. The staff have helped her, and the routine has continued at home. Not only is it good for her but it has helped within the wider context of family life.'

The staff have developed excellent links within the local community and, although these links have been restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have

continued to access community-based facilities with the children, in accordance with government guidance. This has further contributed to providing consistency and opportunities for the children during this time.

The manager and staff embrace training and development and use research to continue to develop and inform their practice. They share their knowledge with other providers, for example regarding the home's medication practices. This has been commented on exceptionally positively by external agencies.

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

Staff have an excellent understanding of the individual needs of each child and who receives a short break at the home. This is due to the in-depth planning that is undertaken prior to commencement at the service. Children's complex needs increase their vulnerability. Staff members are fully aware of this. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of safeguarding and raise any concerns they have. This supports the safety of the children.

Comprehensive care plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans remain working documents. They reflect all children's current care and support needs. Staff demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of individual needs and make sure that plans are followed effectively. When children's behaviours and/or anxieties escalate, staff follow individual plans. They provide diversion and reassurance, which enables behaviour to be managed and supported well.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort to minimise the risk of harm. Where this is used, clear and detailed records are maintained. Records are monitored and reviewed by the manager to make sure that individual behaviour plans are followed, and actions taken by staff are appropriate.

Children have excellent relationships with the staff. This was observed during the inspection and from individual reports from parents, carers and other professionals. One parent said: 'I see how staff are with my child and how happy and confident she is when she comes to stay at the home. I know the staff have my child's best interests at the heart, and this gives me reassurance. During her short breaks at the home, I can honestly say she is happy, safe and cared for really well.'

Most children who access the service have complex health and medical conditions which require medication on a regular basis. Staff have undertaken comprehensive medication administration training to make sure that they have the knowledge and skills to manage and administer medication effectively. The storage of medication is robust and adheres to regulation, including the storage and administration of controlled drugs. Staff with responsibility for medication oversight undertake regular audits of medication. In addition, medication management is audited and reported on by an independent pharmacist. These measures contribute to safeguarding children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has relevant qualifications, skills and experience. She demonstrates an excellent understanding of her role and provides inspirational leadership and oversight of the service. The manager, the deputy manager and the dedicated staff team provide exceptionally high-quality care and support to children who access the service.

The manager has excellent oversight of the progress children are making. She gains this through working with staff and other agencies, and through having comprehensive monitoring systems in place. Where shortfalls are identified, they are responded to swiftly and remedial action is taken to address the shortfall.

All staff have access to and undertake a range of training and development opportunities. This makes sure that their skills and knowledge are effective in supporting them to provide excellent care to all children in their care.

Staff receive regular supervision on both a formal and informal basis. This helps them to identify their individual strengths, reflect on the outcomes for children, and identify any specific training required to meet individual needs. Systems are in place to enable staff to have annual appraisals. However, some have not been held within agreed time frames. This has been identified as a point of action by the manager.

The manager and staff work alongside other professionals to provide holistic and consistent care. Education colleagues comment positively about the collaborative working relationship between school, parents and the home. This is also the opinion of social workers and their team managers.

The manager continually reflects on practice and support provided to make sure that children's outcomes are enhanced by the short-breaks setting. Detailed internal monitoring of outcomes and the service provided reflects this. The home's development plan is comprehensive and clearly demonstrates the ongoing vision for the service. However, the quality of care report does not fully demonstrate detailed analysis. This would further enhance the service.

The manager takes action to address any identified shortfalls in practice. The recommendation made at the previous inspection in relation to records of restraints has been addressed. Effective monitoring of the records takes place. The recommendation in relation to the quality of care reports and effective analysis is ongoing. External support and guidance have been sourced but have not yet been implemented. Therefore, the recommendation has been reiterated at this inspection.

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

Statutory requirements

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

Requirement	Due Date
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once a year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	30 November 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided in the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. In particular, the review of the quality of care report should evaluate the impact of care on the children using the service. This should demonstrate changing patterns and trends and show how the delivery of care and services has influenced these changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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

Registered provider address: Calderdale School Effectiveness Service, 2nd Floor, Westgate House, Westgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1PS

Responsible individual: Guy Greenwood

Registered manager: Jane Stanley

Inspector

Sarah Oldham, Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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