

SC035155

Registered provider: Calderdale 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.

There were two children accessing the short-breaks service at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

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: 26 October 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/10/2021	Full	Outstanding
17/12/2019	Full	Outstanding
22/05/2018	Full	Outstanding
24/10/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive exceptionally high quality care based on their individual needs from a staff team that has expertise in supporting disabled children. The staff are nurturing and committed to making sure that children feel settled and secure during their stay. They know each child well and are attuned to their needs.

The ethos of this home is based on family values, positive relationships and empowering families. Staff work creatively with families, such as in providing outreach support. This meant that for one child they were able to go to school when their parent was unable to take them. For another child, this outreach support means that their night-time routine is consistent, which has helped the child to make progress with their sleep pattern.

Parents are very much a part of their children's stay at the home. This provides parents with reassurance and confidence in the care afforded to their children. Staff place high importance on the relationships that they build with families. One parent said that they trust the staff who look after their child. The parent said: 'Staff have really helped me, they are like my second family.'

Staff understand the emotional well-being and physical health needs of each child. They support children to have good health and work in partnership with specialist health professionals and families. This ensures that children received the support they need. Staff also develop their knowledge of complex health needs through research-informed practice. This has helped to ensure that staff are knowledgeable about the children's complex health needs.

Staff strive to understand children's views and ensure that children are consulted with. Staff make good use of aids to assist communication that are child-friendly. For example, picture communication books are used to help children to express their feelings. One child has made progress in developing independence in self-care because the approach taken by staff has been effective. This is because staff know the child well and understand their communication needs. This leads to children feeling empowered and able to express their views.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Facilities in the home have been adapted to ensure that each child's individual needs are met. Staff ensure that bedrooms are personalised for children during their visit. Children choose the bedroom that they would like to stay in. This provides the children with a sense of familiarity which will make them feel safe and secure.

Children enjoy lots of activities during their stays. The home environment is child-centred and as a result children enjoy sensory play, music, role play and a wide range of indoor and outdoor toys. Children like to do activities in the community, such as walking and swimming. Children are provided with the opportunity to

experience days out to the countryside and the seaside. This enables children to develop positive peer relationships and experience opportunities that they may not be able to access with their families.

Children are helped to improve independence skills. The focus is placed on helping children to progress through setting targets that enhance their social, emotional and physical development. Targets are reviewed regularly by the team of professionals supporting the child and their parents.

Staff are extremely proud of the progress that the children are making and their achievements. One child said that he was happy to visit the home, with a big smile and excitement on his face.

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

Before their stay, the compatibility of children is considered. Staff make every effort to support children to have stays alongside peers. Staff provide families with information about the plan for the child's stay and which staff will be looking after them during their stay. This helps to reduce the anxieties that some children may have by providing them with reassurance about what to expect. This predictability makes the child feel safe.

Each child has a completed risk assessment and care plan that clearly records their assessed risks and vulnerabilities. The risks associated with children with learning needs and disabilities are individualised and well documented in the child's records. Steps for staff to follow are clear and easily understood. Staff identify, manage and respond to the risks to children exceptionally well.

Staff are clear about how to access the right support for individual children. They work proactively with other agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services, school, specialist health professionals and the social workers, in protecting the children. This collaborative approach means that the children are better protected.

The impact on behaviour pertaining to each child's level of learning need or disability is managed well by an experienced staff team. Records provide staff with clear and easy-to-understand steps to follow to manage challenging behaviours. Staff know the children's individual vulnerabilities and are clear on how they should respond to challenging behaviour.

When children are restrained, records show that the restraints are necessary and proportionate to ensure that children are increasingly safe. However, when there is a barrier to the child being able to discuss their feelings about their experience of the restraint, staff have not always ensured that full information is recorded about the steps that they have taken.

There are protective measures in place to ensure that the environment means that children are better protected. Each child is supervised in line with their individual risk assessment, which means that children are made increasingly safe when they are inside the building and when they are out in the community.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager of the home is inspirational and aspirational for the service provided to children and families. She is committed to a child-centred approach and to working with families. The manager is ambitious about the quality of care that children experience. These aspirations are the goals of the whole staff team.

The manager is committed to role modelling excellent practice and staff development. This supportive environment means that staff morale is high, and they are committed to working as a team to provide children with a high standard of nurturing care.

The manager and staff are strong advocates for families and children. The management team leads a group for parents, which means that they can access support from staff and each other. Professionals from specialist services attend the meetings, which means that parents have access to advice and support specific to the children's individual needs. One parent said that the group helped them to access support and to have a voice when they attended meetings about their child.

Managers, staff and families are involved in fundraising events to raise additional funds for the service. This means that children enjoy additional activities, such as days out, and that they have access to technology, such as the interactive equipment that enhances their experience when they have a visit.

The manager has an excellent oversight of the home. She knows the children well and understands the children's individual vulnerabilities and needs. She supports staff to be involved in all aspects of the care of children, including home visits, updating paperwork and attending meetings. This inclusive approach means that staff develop the skills and knowledge to confidently deliver high standards of care to the children.

The manager ensures a multi-agency approach for each child. Professionals and families hold the manager and staff in high regard. One professional said: 'The service that is provided for children is invaluable; they go above and beyond to support the families and children.' This collaborative approach means that families and children are helped to access the right support.

The manager sets clear expectations for her staff. Staff receive regular supervision which is reflective and provides an opportunity to discuss each child's needs. Staff appraisals happen annually, clear and attainable targets are set, and these are understood by staff and reviewed in supervision. This positive approach means that good practice is praised and shortfalls in practice are quickly identified and acted upon.

The manager ensures that staff receive the relevant training to meet the needs of each child. Where children have additional needs or complex health needs, the manager has ensured that training for staff is provided through a specialist service with expertise to meet children's specific needs. This equips staff to provide families with the right advice and support, which means that children are receiving consistent care.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person must ensure that records of restraint are kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where there are issues or trends of concern emerge. this review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. In particular, the registered person should ensure that records of restraint include full details of the actions taken by staff when there is a barrier to the child being able to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.59)

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: Calderdale Council

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

Responsible individual: Guy Greenwood

Registered manager: Jane Stanley

Inspector

Rachel Webster, Social Care Inspector

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