

SC039673

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by Lancashire County Council. The home provides care and accommodation for six children and can provide care for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 December 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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: 11 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
10/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
26/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
Complaints and representations Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1)(3)) In addition, the registered person must ensure that the complaints procedure is kept under review.	07/02/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children's progress is outstanding. Children develop excellent relationships with the members of the staff team, who know them well. One professional said, '[The home] provide an outstanding level of service for my young person. I feel that the staff are committed and supportive of her needs.'

Children take part in a variety of hobbies, including horse riding, gymnastics and cheerleading. Children enjoy taking part in competitions and training in their chosen sports. Innovative practice in promoting and supporting contact means that children benefit from improved family relationships. For example, one child and her parent were provided with private kickboxing lessons to help promote their relationship. This also improved their well-being and helped them to enjoy quality time together through exercise. One parent told the inspector, '[The staff] are amazing... can't ask for a nicer bunch of people, I can speak to them about anything, any time.'

A strength of this home is the quality of transition plans for children when they move into the home and then when they move on from the home to independence. A social worker who recently moved a child into the home told the inspector that the home was recommended to them by another professional due to the success that the home had

had in caring for a child with similar needs. Before a decision was made about the suitability of the placement, the social worker was invited to visit the home to discuss the child's needs and whether or not the home could meet these needs. The social worker said, 'The staff were excellent... [they] understood and empathised [with the child].'

Staff have high aspirations for all children, who are expected to attend education. Staff are highly organised and have clear routines for children, to ensure that they attend their educational placements. In addition to formal education, the staff are keen to ensure that children learn informally, through activities and group work. Children's meetings that are held in the home are excellent. They focus on learning new skills such as oral hygiene, and internet safety. Staff also arrange for outside agencies to visit the home to conduct developmental sessions with children. Children's participation is excellent, furthermore children are encouraged to develop their own projects, for example 'save the environment', to increase their understanding. Children's achievements are recognised and praised by staff. One child was nominated by staff and awarded the 'young citizen of the year award'.

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

The registered manager and staff team have clear shared boundaries for children. This means that children experience consistency which then develops their understanding of acceptable behaviour. For one child who has recently moved into the home, the social worker and headteacher confirmed the positive impact of this for the child. Staff are intuitive to children's behaviour and they act quickly to divert and defuse incidents in the home. As a result of effective behaviour management by staff, there have been no incidents of restraint at the home.

Risk management is excellent. For example, staff undertake direct work and self-assessment with children who self-harm, to understand the child's feelings, help the child and staff to recognise triggers and develop strategies to help the child to keep themselves safe. Practice could be further improved by analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of this work on reducing incidents.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When they do go missing, the home takes proactive steps to ensure the children's safe return and welfare. The registered manager liaises effectively with other professionals to undertake multi-agency safety plans for children. For one child who was going missing from the home persistently, the staff used creative strategies to encourage the child's engagement and understand the risks that going missing from home posed to the child. As a result, the staff developed interventions that reduced the risks associated with this behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is currently without a registered manager. The previous manager has not been in day-to-day charge at the home for several months while overseeing another home in the organisation, and subsequently applying to be the registered manager of

that home.

The manager is supported by two experienced and committed deputies. As a leadership team, they are highly organised and effective managers. They lead a staff team that is equally committed and passionate about ensuring positive outcomes for children. There have been no new staff since the last inspection. Teamwork is excellent. The feedback from professionals about the staff team was overwhelmingly positive.

One professional, a social work practice manager, told the inspector that the manager and staff were strong advocates for children, and in particular, that 'they had enabled a child to gain a number of qualifications. Without the staff's persistence and child-focused practice, [child's name] would not have been able to achieve'.

The managers continue to develop good practice ideas and drive improvement in the home. Furthermore, they encourage staff to share ideas for the home's development. As a result, one member of staff has undertaken a piece of work to encourage children to read and has also applied for funding to help to develop children's literacy skills.

Complaints about the service are rare. However, there is insufficient detail regarding a complaint from a family member. Records do not reflect sufficient detail about the investigation into the complaint, the actions taken, or the outcome of the complaint. Furthermore, the system to manage internal complaints by children is not reflected in the current complaint procedure.

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 differences 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: SC039673

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Paul McIntyre

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jessica Forshaw, social care inspector

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