

SC066120

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority and currently provides care for up to five children who may have emotional and/or social difficulties and/or learning disabilities. This is in line with the home's statement of purpose.

The manager registered with Ofsted to manage this home in November 2022.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Good
28/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
03/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
08/01/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have consistently good experiences living at this home. Staff ensure that the children are not defined by their disability or additional needs. Children are regarded as children first. Staff and managers work hard to ensure that the children can have the same opportunities and experiences as their non-disabled peers.

Children make steady progress. All children attend school or college and have good attendance. Children's education plans are linked to their targets at home, and this continued practice helps them to develop the skills that they need. This has supported one child to start to communicate through words, and another to choose their own snacks.

Children's social experiences are wide and varied. Staff make the effort to plan ahead and find places that are fun and accessible. Careful thought and planning by the staff enabled one child to enjoy a short break in a holiday lodge for the first time.

Staff encourage the children to develop their self-help skills. One child is planning to move in to supported accommodation. They have learned skills that will help them to manage well. They can now help to prepare meals and wash their clothes. This has promoted their independence and they have become more confident.

Children who move in to the home experience a smooth transition that is centred around their needs and wishes. The children's guide, which contains photographs, symbols and words, provides the children with a true understanding of what they can expect. The children's plans, which are informed by their parents and teachers, consider all the children's known information. Children are well kept informed and know what to expect, so they settle into the home quickly.

Children's relationships with their family are valued, irrespective of where the children's family live. Many parents and extended family members are regular visitors to the home and they are involved in birthday celebrations and festivals. One child has an improved relationship with their sister because the staff have been flexible and creative in how they support the children's time together.

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

Children benefit from having consistent and well-established individualised routines. Children are supported to understand their routines through visual aids and verbal prompts. This helps them to feel secure.

Staff understand the individual risks to the children. Children's risk assessments are detailed and personalised to reflect their individual needs. These assessments clearly set out what the staff must do to minimise the risks for children. Staff respond to

any of the children's new risks effectively. This quick response ensured that one child's safety was prioritised when they became unsettled during a car journey.

Children are supported to take risks that are appropriate to their age and developmental level. Staff understand the importance of children being able to take risks in the same way as their non-disabled peers. Staff ensure that safeguards are in place, such as parental controls and regular phone checks, for those children who have a mobile phone. In addition, work is completed with the children so that they can understand the risks and know how to keep themselves safe.

Children have not been missing from home as there are high levels of staff supervision in place. Each child has a detailed and personalised missing-from-home plan. This means that, should a child go missing from the home, the risks are clear and the staff know how to respond.

There has been one allegation, which was managed well. The manager acted quickly to ensure that the children were safe while the investigations took place. The manager worked effectively with the police and the local authority designated officer and information was shared appropriately. The child and the staff member were supported well during and after the investigation.

Staff understand the children's behaviour, and they are attuned to the children's triggers and non-verbal cues. The staff's knowledge of what works for the children means that the use of physical intervention is only as a last resort, and the least restrictive measure is used.

The home is sufficiently staffed, and the use of agency workers has reduced. However, on one occasion, gaps in one recruit's employment history was not thoroughly explored. In addition, information about the applicants' suitability to work with children has not always been verified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has an aspirational vision for the home, and she has started to put plans in place that will help her to drive positive change. Staff describe having confidence in her leadership and see her as a role model for good practice.

Staff feel safe and well supported because they receive regular and effective supervision sessions. These focus on the children's needs and how best the staff can improve their practice to improve the children's outcomes. In addition, staff use their supervision sessions to talk about their personal matters that are affecting them. This helps to ensure that the staff's personal issues do not impact on their practice.

Staff work well together as a team. Team meetings take place at regular intervals, and they are generally well attended. The manager sets a clear agenda, which helps to ensure that the right matters are being discussed. When serious incidents occur, the manager supports the staff to reflect on them, and she provides the staff with

clear guidance on the changes to practice that are needed. This minimises the risk of the situation being repeated.

The manager and staff work together with parents, health professionals and education staff effectively. Outcomes for children are improving because everyone involved has a shared understanding of the children's needs and their aspirations. This joined-up working has enabled the manager and staff to better understand one child's communication needs, which has resulted in additional training for staff being identified.

Children's views influence how they are cared for. Staff routinely seek the children's views using a wide range of methods, including observation, talking to children, and using the children's individual communication methods. This has supported one child to have significant influence over their plan to move on to supported accommodation.

An independent person visits the home each month and provides a report that evaluates how well the children's well-being is promoted and whether staff safeguard them effectively. However, the independent person has missed an opportunity to seek the staff's experiences of working in the home as they rely on the written records and the manager's account. In addition, visits are not always at times when children are present. This oversight prevents the independent person from gaining a full and true account of how the operation of the home influences the children's progress and experiences.

The manager has good oversight of practice, which includes the administration of medication. However, on one occasion, a child was given medication that could have caused them harm due to an allergy. The manager's evaluation identified the need for refresher training for all staff. However, the manager did not notify Ofsted of this serious incident. This does not help to keep the regulator informed.

The manager completes a quality of care review twice each year. They talk about children's progress and future plans. The review does not include an evaluation of the views of others, including children and professionals. This does not demonstrate how the manager is learning from the views of others and driving forward improvements in the home.

Children's records contain accurate descriptions of their experiences living in the home. However, some of the children's records are not signed and dated. This does not help the manager to hold staff to account if discrepancies are made.

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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all gaps in employment are accounted for. In addition, when references from past employers are sought, the registered person should assure themselves about the applicant's suitability to work with children.	29 March 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that they notify Ofsted when a significant medication error occurs.	29 March 2024
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.	29 March 2024

When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a high standard and all repairs are done in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records are signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- The registered person should ensure that they have systems in place to evaluate children's experiences and support continuous improvements in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: SC066120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Katie-Jo Brierley

Inspector

Rachel Walker, Social Care Inspector

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