

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 or learning disabilities. This is in line with the home's statement of purpose.

The registered manager left in April 2022. A new manager is in post but has not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 September 2022

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: 28 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2021	Full	Outstanding
03/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
08/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
13/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making progress from their starting points and have excellent relationships with staff. The staff know and understand the children, and the children enjoy the company of, and being with, the staff. This enables children to access staff support when needed.

The manager advocates on behalf of the children constantly. Close working relationships with medical professionals ensure that children receive the support they need. This includes working proactively to give staff the skills and equipment needed so they can care for the children at the home. This approach avoids unnecessary admissions into specialist care for children with complex needs.

The manager recognises the potential lack of external support when children move on from the home. The manager supports children to develop their independence skills over a long period. One child recently had a positive move to adult accommodation, where they are reported to be thriving.

Communication with children is positive because staff can identify and respond to non-verbal cues. However, the nuances of how children communicate are not recorded clearly. This prevents all staff and those working with the children from having all the information they need to support children to communicate effectively.

Staff support children to take part in a range of activities, including holidays in the United Kingdom. Staff think creatively to ensure that children can access activities regardless of any disabilities they may have. Staff help children to celebrate life events, such as school proms and birthdays. They ensure that children's families and loved ones are involved in these celebrations.

Children's records are regularly updated. However, the language used in the children's records is not always child-friendly, particularly in daily recordings, physical interventions and incident records.

The home needs refurbishment and plans are in place for the work to begin. However, the bath has been broken since the last full inspection. The provider has asked for this to be fixed as part of the overall refurbishment plans. This means that the bath has still not been replaced and children are unable to use it.

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

Children are settled because staff are able to recognise and identify situations that may upset children and result in unwanted behaviours. This enables staff to intervene early and prevent incidents from occurring.

The manager and the staff team are aware of the limitations of three of the children having restrictive court orders in place. Some areas of the home are locked, but the children who are not subject to these orders understand how to access these areas with staff support. These restrictions are reviewed regularly, ensuring that children's liberties are not unnecessarily deprived.

Children spend a lot of time with staff and this discourages children from going missing from the home. Clear guidelines are in place should a child go missing, to ensure that all staff know how to respond and where to seek immediate support to locate a missing child.

Children's individual risk assessments are detailed for four of the children. A new format is being used for one of the children that does not prompt for the information needed. The manager recognised this during the inspection and immediately addressed this.

When incidents occur, staff can support the children to prevent harm to themselves or others. Staff rarely need to hold children. The manager reviews incidents and physical interventions and ensures children are spoken to about an incident if they are held.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The newly appointed acting manager knows the children well and recognises the progress they are making. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has put plans in place to continue to make improvements in the quality of care that children receive.

Staff said that they are well supported and they think that recent changes in the leadership and management team have been implemented smoothly. Staff feel included in the changes that have been made and that their opinions are valued and listened to. They receive regular, reflective supervisions, which they find beneficial.

A recruitment drive is currently taking place to increase staffing levels. Staff are working overtime to ensure that children have consistent support. On one occasion, a child had to attend hospital overnight due to a lack of staffing. However, an on-call system has been implemented to prevent this from happening again.

Staff do not have the necessary training in communication that would benefit the children further. The manager has identified this and is sourcing training. However, this is needed for all five children and was clearly identified prior to a child moving into the home in December 2021.

Following incidents and physical interventions, staff do not receive a formal debrief from the manager. This does not allow for the manager or staff to be able to evaluate the incident that required a child to be held and identify if any changes in staff practice are needed.

An independent person visits the home monthly. However, the visitor does not always speak to children or parents and has failed to identify any shortfalls. This prevents the visitor from being able to make an informed comment about the safety and well-being of children. It also prevents the manager from addressing shortfalls and improving the care that children receive.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)) In particular, that staff have training to meet the children's needs, particularly their communication methods, and that any incidents and physical interventions are discussed with staff to support learning.	31 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained to a high standard and all repairs are done promptly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. This includes the independent visitor spending time with the children and speaking to staff and parents to ascertain the safety and well-being of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that all information recorded about a child would be helpful for a child to read and that records to help staff support the children provide clear guidance. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 address: Leeds City Council, Civic Hall, Calverley Street,
Leeds LS1 1UR

Responsible individual: Joel Hanna

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debra Boldy, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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