

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC066120
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Leeds City Council
Registered person	Leeds City Council, Children's Service, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds, LS2 8DT

Responsible individual	Stephen Walker
Registered manager	William Nealon
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC066120

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people make significant and continuing progress through living at this home. Their achievements are individualised and specific to their complex needs and development.
- Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic in the work they do to support young people. They are ambitious for them and strive continuously to improve the care they give. Staff respond exceptionally well to the presenting and varied needs of young people.
- Young people thrive in an environment that is emotionally warm and attuned to their wishes and feelings. Staff regularly consult with young people, listen to their views and, appropriately act upon those wishes. Young people are respected and valued as individuals.
- Young people grow in confidence to assert themselves and they learn new skills that support their growing independence.
- Young people's emotional and physical health improves. They learn to manage their emotions and responses in social situations. This in turn broadens and increases their positive experiences.
- Young people's progress is underpinned by thoughtful planning and goal setting. Staff apply these plans in fun and creative ways that engage young people.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12 The protection of children standard 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to the formulation of impact risk assessments and clearly documented missing from home protocols, the registered person must ensure, (2)(a) that staff: (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person	05/02/2016
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether- children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	05/02/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. (Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9) With particular reference to the external areas of the property being kept tidy.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children. Children and young people who use the home have special educational needs, physical disabilities and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2014	Full	Good
30/12/2013	Interim	Good progress
16/05/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
The progress young people make is highly individualised and is set against their complex needs. The patient and positive care that they experience, ensures that young people make progress in their ability to manage increasingly more demanding social situations. All young people attend school and through the high quality care they receive, make progress in interacting with peers and responding appropriately in that environment. A particular strength of the home is the level and frequency of consultation that young people enjoy. One young person wrote, 'I don't like Armley Park,' and is no longer taken there. Other young people have expressed a wish to have more meals out and go bowling more often. This now forms a greater part of their activities. Staff apply considerable thought to the introduction of new activities, so that whilst being fun, they are purposeful to the individual's development. As a result, young people learn and develop through positive experiences that they influence. One social worker commenting on the progress of a young person said, 'He has done a lot more trips and is going out a lot more in the community. They are able to put boundaries in place and he is able to make choices.' Staff work exceedingly hard to ensure that all young people have a strong voice that is heard and respected. Staff employ varied and creative methods to engage young people in supporting them to communicate their views. As a result, their wishes and opinions are central to the planning that takes place within the home. Young people grow in confidence through the high levels of support and encouragement they receive from staff. Their achievements, personalities and tastes are expressed throughout the home. They are fully encouraged to develop and explore their choice in clothes, music, decoration of their rooms and the planning of future holidays. A social worker commenting on the emotional security that a young person now enjoys said, 'He could look quite sad and now I have seen him really happy. He used to stand at the window of his previous home looking out. He would mouth the word mum a lot. Those behaviours have changed, he doesn't do this anymore. He is signalling a lot more than previously. He feels happy here.' Young people become more confident in situations that require a complex set of social and technical interactions. For example, with support from staff, one young person can identify an item he wishes to buy on the internet, go to the particular shop, interact with the sales person and pay for the item himself using his own	

debit card and pin-number. Other skills young people learn include shopping for food, meal preparation and keeping their personal space tidy. With opportunities consistently reinforced by staff, young people learn new skills that support their independence and eventual transition into young adulthood.

Young people's friendships within the home are sensitively nurtured and promoted. Staff take these friendships fully into account when planning activities and holidays. As a result, young people experience a life within the home that values attachments and supports the development of empathy. For example, when planning a holiday, young people make active choices and willingly compromise in order to ensure that others, less physically able, have the necessary facilities to fully participate.

Young people's health improves through living at the home. Although menu choice is fully promoted, this is balanced through staff promoting healthy eating. For example, in order to increase one young person's in-take of fruit and vegetables and decrease unhealthy options, 'smoothies' were introduced. These are now part of this young person's diet, with incremental changes to include both fruit and vegetables. This is also accompanied by staff encouraging regular exercise through gym attendance and walks.

Young people's identity is actively promoted through high levels of liaison with family members and the promotion of contact. Staff forge excellent relationships with family members. This supports young people, both emotionally and practically, to sustain and develop these relationships. Family members are welcomed into the home on a regular basis and are fully included in events such as special occasion parties.

Young people's achievements are celebrated. Great care and attention is given to displaying their creative work alongside the many photographs of young people taking part in activities. As a result, young people receive the clear and unwavering message that they are important and central to the home. One parent commented, 'The staff are fantastic, brilliant, loving people and they give more than 100 percent.'

The home is undergoing substantial refurbishment and improvement. There are large, well-lit areas for young people to play and socialise, alongside more intimate quiet areas. All the young people's bedrooms reflect their individual tastes and they are fully involved in the choosing and purchase of colour schemes, bedding, shelving and accessories. Each bedroom is very different and thoughtfully decorated. Whilst the internal areas are comfortable and well maintained, the outside play areas require tidying. This does not have any significant impact on young people's safety or wellbeing.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people experience care that is attentive to their vulnerabilities and individual needs arising from their disabilities. Staff provide good levels of supervision within the home, without unnecessary restrictions upon their freedom to move around and explore. Risks associated with child sexual exploitation and drug-taking behaviour are not a feature in the lives of young people. There has been one brief incident of missing from home since the previous inspection. The staff's response to this incident was quick and decisive with appropriate procedures followed in order to ensure the young person's safe return. Physical intervention is rarely used or required. Staff have good levels of insight and knowledge about young people's complex needs which are managed in a sensitive and supportive way. This helps them develop trusting relationships with staff. As a result, one young person who previously presented challenging and aggressive behaviour has shown a significant reduction in these incidents. Her parent commenting upon this progress said, 'She has come on in leaps and bounds. We have never looked back since she joined the home.' Sanctions within the home are not used, and socially acceptable behaviour is promoted through positive reinforcement and consistency. Young people at the home live together harmoniously. Some have developed lasting friendships that are sustained through staff facilitating joint community activities. The home has, since the last inspection, experienced a change of focus and is now providing long-term care to young people. These changes are reflected within their statement of purpose. Young people transitioning to this home have done so in a planned manner allowing them incremental opportunities to familiarise themselves with staff. This provides young people with a high level of ownership and belonging within the home. Risk assessments are generally reflective of the young people's complex needs. However, a minority number of impact assessments and missing from home protocols do not provide the necessary clarity for staff to follow if they are not as familiar with the young people.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. He has been registered for this home since 2013 and holds a Level 4 Diploma in Management. He leads a committed and dynamic team of staff who are enthusiastic about the care and progress of each young person. He is confident and ambitious and creates an ethos of high expectations for staff in the care offered to young people. He is very active within the home, making himself easily available to both staff and young people. New staff have joined the current staff team. The manager works hard to ensure that all staff work consistently and are confident to meet the needs of young people. The manager has brought about changes in the recording and evidencing of work with young people. This ensures that individual work is highly focused on their needs and expressed wishes and preferences. The manager commenting upon this change said, 'The expectation is that all work done by staff has a reason, and that reason relates solely to young people's progress and development.' The manager is extremely knowledgeable about the young people's needs and continuously seeks to improve care. These high expectations are clearly communicated through embedded processes of supervision, team meetings and appraisals. This ensures that staff are fully supported to provide excellent care and that they too are aspirational for improvement. The manager creates a culture that young people's needs, wishes and progress is the sole purpose of the home. The manager seeks the continuous improvement of the home and has introduced systems and processes to enable this to happen. For example, staff have access to the home's debit cards. This facilitates purchasing items for young people without unnecessary delay and avoids bureaucratic systems for petty cash. This enables a more timely response to young people's needs and autonomy in staff decision-making. This has led to freeing-up of staff time to enable a greater proportion with young people on activities and enhancing their independence skills. Working with other agencies is central to the home's approach in providing holistic services to young people. Staff are currently piloting a healthcare records access scheme that enables staff to view up-to-date essential information regarding young people's appointments and prescriptions. This provides an accurate overview of their health needs and reduces any confusion with regards to changes in medication. The manager uses a range of sources to inform his review of the quality of care. This includes both qualitative and quantitative data to inform the planning for the home. This involves looking at improvements in decoration and refurbishment, staff development and providing greater opportunities for young people to develop	

life skills. This enables the manager to maintain good insight into each young person's needs and ensure progress is continuously made in each area of their life.

As a result of a recent review of the homes processes, the management seek to make further improvements to the timing of transitions for young people, the consultative process and transparently challenge other professionals when this is not forthcoming. This ensures that young people's needs are central to determining their future plans.

The independent visits to the home are in accordance with prescribed timescales and offer an over-view of the home. They do not however specifically comment on whether young people's welfare is appropriately safeguarded. This is a breach of the regulation, however this has minimal impact upon young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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