

SC066796

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and/or young people whose plan is to live in a medium- or long-term residential setting.

The home is managed by an experienced and appropriately qualified manager, who has been registered with Ofsted since 2014.

Visit dates: 27 to 28 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 19 November 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children and young people are cared for by a committed and consistent team of staff who understand their complex needs. Children and young people are supported by the staff, who provide routines and boundaries to help children and young people to develop and achieve.

Staff have built trusting relationships with the children and young people. As a result, children and young people have been able to speak with staff about their worries and can share their wishes and feelings openly.

Staff regularly access specialist support and advice to help them to better align their care and support to children's and young people's individual needs. This promotes the children's and young people's physical health and emotional health and well-being.

The children's and young people's education is promoted by the staff team. Staff work with education professionals effectively to encourage children and young people to participate with their learning. Staff provide informal learning opportunities, including cooking, music and gardening, to develop and enhance children's and young people's life skills.

Children's and young people's family time, where appropriate, is promoted by the staff team. During the lockdown, when face-to-face time was restricted, the use of technology facilitated family time. However, the staff team encouraged the use of handwritten letters to create a more personal form of communication between family members.

Children and young people are prepared and supported well by the staff when they are ready to move on from the home. Staff work with professionals to ensure that children and young people have a smooth and planned transition. This helps those moving on from the home to settle into their new home. During the COVID-19 pandemic, two young people have moved on from the home. One young person remains in touch and shares their achievements with staff at the home.

The safety of children

Children are supported to keep themselves safe. Good risk assessments and management plans provide the staff team with strategies to follow. These help the staff to focus on the children's and young people's individual support needs and their risk-taking behaviour. Children and young people are given the opportunity by staff to discuss this and reflect on how they can make different choices to keep themselves safe.

The staff have educated the children and young people with information about COVID-19 and how to keep safe in the home and community. Children and young people sit with staff to watch the government briefings. This gives children and young people the opportunity to talk about the infection. As a result of their better understanding, children and young people have started to comply with the home's COVID-19 safety plans.

When children and young people have gone missing from the home, the staff team refer to the individual missing-from-care protocols. The staff attempt to locate children and young people to return them safely. Incidents of children and young people going missing from the home at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have reduced.

Staff promote positive behaviour with children and young people, and negative behaviour is challenged appropriately. These are discussed in individual support sessions with the children and young people. As a result, sanctions and physical interventions have not occurred.

Most staff are up to date with mandatory training. However, a couple of staff have not completed safeguarding training. Given the complex needs of the children and young people, this is a gap in some staff's professional development.

Staff benefit from regular supervision, team meetings and consultation sessions with the emotional health and well-being team. This helps staff to have a better understanding of their role and responsibilities to keep all children and young people safe.

Leaders and managers

The manager has been working remotely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he has been in daily contact with senior managers, the deputy manager and the staff team. He has maintained full oversight of the home and the care of the children and young people.

Staff speak positively of the support they have received from the manager and as a team, during these unprecedented times.

Communication between professionals and partner agencies is good. The use of technology and social distancing has allowed meetings to continue. This has provided continual multi-agency working to ensure that children's and young people's needs are met.

The manager has good monitoring and quality assurance systems in place. He knows the strengths and development needs of the staff team and the home. He uses the information to set out what needs to happen with the staff team to ensure that children and young people receive good-quality care.

An emergency placement overnight for a child and a further admission for the same child was not in line with the home's statement of purpose.

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 compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1) (5)) In particular, ensure that the admissions of young people are in line with the home's statement of purpose.	11/12/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	11/12/2020

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC066796

Registered provider: Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Registered provider address: Wakefield Council, County Hall, Bond Street, Wakefield, Yorkshire WF1 2QW

Responsible individual: Mark Nevill

Registered manager: Ian Henderson

Inspector

Sue Hatton, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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