

SC406505

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 12 children or young people who have learning difficulties, physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment. Children and young people stay at the home for short breaks and on a shared-care basis.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 December 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 20 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Through the attentive care provided by a very experienced staff team, the children and young people's complex needs are met to a consistently high standard.
- The staff have developed initiatives that increase the opportunities for the children and young people to communicate their needs and choices. The 'voice' of the children and young people is an exceptionally strong feature of practice in this home.
- The children and young people are kept safe during their stays through effective supervision and attention to their health needs. This is reassuring to parents and carers.
- Through an in-depth knowledge of the skills of his staff, the manager is empowering them to enhance and improve the care practice in the home. A wide range of creative ideas, which will be disseminated to other homes, is improving the care experience of the children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/01/2017	Full	Good
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/01/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children and young people who stay at this home have a wide range of diverse and complex needs. A very stable staff team with a wealth of experience ensures that the physical, communication and emotional needs of the children and young people are fully met. Although the children and young people only stay for short breaks, staff identify goals to improve their skills and incorporate these into their care. For example, one young person is developing the ability to brush her own hair and another to brush his teeth. This ensures that the children and young people, whatever their abilities, enhance their independence and make excellent progress towards their goals.

The care of the children and young people is supported by unambiguous, child-centred placement plans. Because of the high level of need of some of the children and young people, these plans are crucial in ensuring their safety and well-being, such as knowing what action to take in the event of a seizure. A pictorial medication signature sheet has been introduced to enable the children and young people to sign for their own medication if they wish. This creative way of involving the children and young people significantly increases their understanding and control of this aspect of their lives.

Exceptionally strong aspects of the care practice are the ways in which the children and young people are given opportunities to make choices and make their needs known. An innovative project to introduce objects of reference has resulted in children and young people who are non-verbal having an increased way of making their needs known. The member of staff who led this project researched the system and involved a local school in producing the plaques and objects. She has trained all members of staff in the most effective way to use them.

The young people's guide is available using alternative methods of communication, such as picture exchange communication system symbols and photographs. A member of staff has developed individual storybooks written specifically for particular children or young people to explain their transitions into or out of the home. This is another example of the home using a creative approach to benefit children and young people.

The wishes of the children and young people are diligently executed by the staff when it is possible. One young person wanted to see a Ferrari, so a visit to a local car showroom was arranged. Another wanted to see the costume department at the local theatre and a visit has taken place.

For the young people approaching transition into adult services, staff consult them about their hopes and dreams for the future. A large display documents what they hope to achieve, supported by photographs and pictures from the young people. One young person wants to join the police and another to live in a bungalow by the sea.

Any religious or cultural preferences of the children and young people are taken into account. Vegetarian and halal diets are catered for. The staff have created a 'what's coming next' board in the entrance, which looks forward to festivals such as Hanukah.

Exceptionally good relationships are established between the staff, children and young people. The staff are highly attuned to the body language and moods of the children and young people and use this to meet their needs. One social worker said that the face of one young person 'lights up' when her key worker is mentioned.

Relationships with the majority of parents and carers are extremely positive. A large number of parents and carers who were present at the Christmas party were lavish in their praise for the care given in the home. One parent commented that the home was 'vital' in their ability to care for their son. A recently introduced newsletter, monthly coffee mornings with speakers and a home Facebook page all serve to keep parents and carers informed and involved in the life of the home. These are additional creative ways in which the staff engage those who experience this home.

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

Some of the children and young people have extremely complex health needs and they are kept very safe and well by comprehensive protocols and medication management systems. Risk assessments are thorough and support the staff to mitigate risks across a broad range of life situations that the children and young people encounter.

The staff are very well trained in any procedures they need to undertake. The quality of the training is high because some of this training is delivered individually by health colleagues. However, because it is individual there have been delays in staff receiving the training. This has resulted in the service provided by the home for two children being deferred for a number of months. This has been challenged by the manager but is unfortunately beyond his control.

Some of the children and young people display highly challenging behaviour because of their additional needs. The response of the staff is guided by full, individualised behaviour management plans. The staff only use physical restraint as a last resort. By using their in-depth knowledge of the children and young people, and being flexible in their approach, they are successful in reducing and preventing incidents of challenging behaviour. Incidents of restraint are being recorded appropriately and a previous requirement in respect of this regulation is met.

The children and young people who are vulnerable, because they cannot move away from danger or tell others about it, are protected by one-to-one staffing ratios and the constant presence of staff who look out for their welfare.

The building is secured through the use of a fob system on internal doors. This restricts the movements of those children and young people who need to be kept safe in this way. However, staff risk-assess each child and young person on their ability to have a fob and access areas of the building independently. If it is deemed safe, they undertake

direct work with them and they are given their own job. This is outstanding practice, which helps the children and young people to learn responsibility and provides them with a sense of empowerment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager provides inspirational leadership in the home. His emphasis on developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of his staff team has resulted in a wide range of creative measures being introduced since the last inspection. These are significantly improving the experiences and progress of the children and young people.

He is currently strengthening the continual professional development of senior staff by consulting with them and devising a career pathway, which will be used across other homes in the local authority. He is also using peer observation of supervision sessions to support and challenge supervisors and those being supervised. Although this could feel threatening to those being observed, the manager has been successful in establishing a culture of open professionalism where staff are eager to develop using this creative approach.

The manager ensures that the home fulfils its statement of purpose to 'understand and meet each individual's personal, emotional, social, health, religious and cultural needs by working within individual plans'. The children and young people are supported to have a voice and influence by making choices and decisions.

Monitoring and evaluation systems have been strengthened, with the six-monthly review of the quality of care now benefiting from the feedback of the children, young people, parents and carers and other professionals. A previous requirement in respect of this is met. The independent scrutiny afforded by the independent visitor would be enhanced by some unannounced visits being undertaken.

The manager is very aware of the impact that transitioning in or out of the service can have on children, young people and their parents or carers. He has delegated staff to research good transition practice. They have produced a fact-sheet and protocol for staff to undertake with their key child or young person. They have also produced photographic books of all the homes in the area where young people may move to. The staff also undertake supporting visits to the family home and the new provision. These measures significantly reduce the stress and anxiety of the children, young people and their parents or carers.

The manager and staff partner well with other professionals to ensure that children and young people are cared for in a holistic manner. The manager challenges, in the interests of children and young people, when necessary and ensures that the children and young people have access to the children's rights service. Relationships with parents and carers are warm and responsive. One parent's feedback was: 'Thank you for being a home-from-home all these years.'

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: SC406505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Registered provider address: 40 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL

Responsible individual: Stephen Walker

Registered manager: Christopher Graefe

Inspector

Janet Black, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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