

# 1236540

Registered provider: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager was registered by Ofsted in June 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 January 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
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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	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:** 12 December 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/04/2017	Full	Good
11/10/2016	Full	Requires improvement

## 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, the 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
<p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (7)(a)) This report should be received by HMCI by the end of the month following the inspection.</p>	14/02/2019

### Recommendations

- Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. Staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe both within and outside the home. Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and that the home is an environment which supports this ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10). In particular, the registered manager should ensure that all staff undertake training on issues relating to exploitation including 'county lines' activity.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress from their starting points. One parent said that their child had never been as happy as they are now since moving to the home. Professionals who have contact with the home spoke very positively about the way staff care for the children. One member of the professional network said: 'I can honestly say that the home is exemplary in their approach and support for the child. We cannot speak highly enough of them.'

Children enjoy stable placements and have lived in the home for some time. They have grown up in the care of the same staff group. Staff know the children and their families very well. Children have improved relationships with their families because of the

support from members of staff. As a result, children have better contact with their relatives, which will help them when they are older. One child was able to return to live with his family because of the support that members of staff provided. The father said that his child would not have been able to come home without the help of the staff team. This is an excellent outcome.

Children generally follow expectations in respect of their behaviour and get on with each other. Children understand that routines and rules are used positively and they respond well. The need for physical restraint has reduced significantly. Consequences do not need to be given very often. The atmosphere in the home is usually warm and relaxed because children understand what is expected of them. This means that children are growing up with positive experiences of day-to-day life in their home. This will help them once they move to their permanent placements.

Children go to school consistently and attend full timetables. Because of this, they are making sustained progress with their education. Members of staff advocate on behalf of the children to ensure that they receive the education they need. This has been a significant improvement for these children. It means they are gaining knowledge and skills that will be of real value to them as they grow up and make plans for their future.

The children are healthy. They attend all routine medical appointments and understand the benefits of regular check-ups. Children have open and honest conversations about health issues. This means that they do not become worried unnecessarily. One child was able to come off medication after moving to the home because he is so much more settled. The home's approach means that the children are likely to have improved health outcomes as they get older.

The staff team has excellent support from other professionals. This includes youth offending workers and therapeutic and mental health services. If a child needs extra help or advice, staff arrange urgent appointments. Children are growing up knowing that the staff who look after them will respond to their needs without delay. As well as this addressing the specific problem, children's sense of self-worth improves because of this approach.

The children know the long-term plans for their future placements. Staff talk to them about their wishes and feelings and encourage them to be involved with their plans. Children know that they will not move on to their permanent placement until the right family is found for them. Staff also ensure that social workers speak to the children to explain what is likely to happen and when. This means that children are not confused or worried about the future and can tell their social worker about what is important to them.

Children take part in a range of activities. These include sports, arts, uniformed groups and volunteering. Staff support these interests. They try to incorporate events into family contact if this is appropriate for the children. As well as providing enjoyment for the children, these activities mean they mix with young people who are not looked after. This helps them to build skills in interacting with a wider range of adults and children

than otherwise would be possible.

The progress of the children is captured in 'journey books' that are bright, creative and kept up to date. Children can look at them whenever they want. Children enjoy showing these books to people who come to see them. As a result of the journey books, children can see at a glance that they have made very good progress. They have a good understanding of their lives since moving to the home. This is particularly important to these children, as their individual histories were not always so well recorded previously.

The physical surroundings of the home are very nice. Children are growing up in a home that is warm, welcoming and homely. Their bedrooms are decorated according to their interests and are kept to a high standard. This helps the children to invest in the home. Pictures of the children enjoying events, such as trips, holidays and the first day back at school are displayed prominently in the communal areas. This helps to remind the children and any visitors that members of staff value them.

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

Children are safe in this home. They rarely go missing and they do not use drugs, drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes. None of the children is currently subject to any form of exploitation. None of the children is involved in criminal activity. Children know that staff care about them and will protect them if they have difficulties. Staff know the children very well and can tell if something is worrying them. This is particularly important for these children who have experienced significant adversity before moving to this home. They now feel held in mind by their carers and are learning that their well-being matters to others.

Staff prepare individual risk assessments for each child in their care. These documents are reviewed and updated monthly. The risk assessments are also amended following any incident needing a change in approach. The risk assessments are detailed enough to be meaningful and are also easy to read. This approach to risk assessment helps to keep the children safe. Their needs are at the centre of these documents, and strategies are appropriate to the child in question.

Children have individual care plans that reflect their own needs. The registered manager and staff review care plans regularly. Changes are made when required. Staff talk to the children about why a particular response is essential and encourage them to provide their views. This emphasis on safeguarding shows the children that their carers will protect them from risk. However, staff do so in a way which feels reassuring rather than oppressive. This approach helps children to value their own well-being. They also begin to learn to identify potential risks for themselves.

The home takes necessary action if there is a safeguarding issue. The home's procedures are followed closely. On the rare occasions when children go missing, return home interviews always take place. The registered manager reviews all such incidents. He has restorative conversations with children about what happened. Children learn that, if there has been an issue, staff and the manager are interested in their perspective. As

well as keeping the children safe and giving them a voice, this helps to improve children's sense of self-worth.

Members of staff work together to provide consistent boundaries for the children. This means that children know what is expected of them as well as any likely consequences. Most of the staff team members have worked together since the home opened and they know each other very well. They have developed trusting and respectful relationships with each other as well as with the children. This means that children receive the same information from all staff, which they find reassuring. Children are learning that trusted adults are there to help them. This will be very important when they move to their permanent placements.

Staff should have specific training on the risks posed to children from 'county lines'-type activity. None of the children is currently subject of such behaviour. However, staff should know the local risks to be able to protect the children in the future. This means that staff would know the signs to look for and would be able to intervene at the earliest point if concerns arise. Staff would also use their knowledge to talk to the children to help improve their ability to protect themselves. As a result, children would be more likely to remain safe, even if there is an increase in this type of activity in the local area.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The registered manager is an outstanding leader. He is passionate about the children in his care and wants the very best for them. The deputy manager is just as committed to the children. Together, they form a very effective management team. They lead by example and the staff team shares their vision. Feedback confirms this. One professional said: 'All the staff are very knowledgeable, whether it is the manager, deputy or the residential staff. The manager in particular has such varied knowledge. It shines though. This then passes on to the staff team.' This dedication means that staff go the extra mile for the children in their care; in turn, the children make significant progress in all areas of their development.

The registered manager ensures that staff encourage progress for all the children. This is true even when children achieve a level of stability. The registered manager does not accept stagnation for such children. Instead, he looks at what their next achievements might be. As a result, children do not feel overlooked because they are doing well. Children continue to make progress in different areas of their lives. They are encouraged to have aspirations for themselves and are supported to achieve those goals.

The registered manager developed the model of care that the home uses. It works extremely well and has been adopted by other homes in the area. The model of care reinforces to the children that they matter to their carers, who will keep them safe. This approach has been embedded into other aspects of the home, including team meetings and staff supervision. This helps staff to feel valued and they develop their skills in looking after the children. Children benefit as a result of being cared for by committed, dedicated members of staff who enjoy their work.

The registered manager works very closely with other professionals. For example, he is working with the local authority fostering team to improve the ability of foster carers to meet the needs of children when they move into permanent placements. The manager wants to reduce the potential for placement breakdown, by sharing with foster carers relevant aspects of the model of care. This work will help provide a seamless transition from residential care to foster care for the children. Staff from the home will support such placements after the children move on. This will further enhance the potential outcomes for the children. This work is innovative and will have a direct benefit for the children currently living in the home.

Staff receive effective supervision and appraisals of their practice. The manager and other supervisors address any practice issues quickly. Such issues are recorded fully to show what the manager has decided. More complex matters are escalated when necessary. Team meeting records show that any potential team difficulties are dealt with quickly. This means that children are looked after by staff who work closely together and have shared hopes for them.

There is a high level of trust in the staff team. Only one member of staff has left the home since it opened. New staff members undergo robust recruitment processes. The probation period is highly effective. In all staff, poor levels of practice are picked up immediately. When appropriate, restorative conversations take place. Children benefit from being looked after by staff whose practice is scrutinised so closely.

Staff, including managers, undertake training to support their care of the children. The registered manager updates a training matrix and shares this with the staff team at each team meeting. Additional training is organised when necessary. This means that children are looked after by staff who have the necessary skills to perform their roles well.

The manager ensures that the running of the home is well ordered. Children's files are up to date, as are behaviour logs. Staff add to the journey books regularly, so that they do not become out of date. Files are efficiently organised, so that key documents can be found quickly. The manager reduces the need for duplication of records as much as possible. Health and safety processes are all up to date, and any repairs are organised quickly. This means that staff can spend time with the young people, rather than completing paperwork or chasing up outstanding checks. Children have the benefit of staff time, at the same time as living in a well-run home.

## **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:** 1236540

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Calderdale School Effectiveness Service, 2nd Floor,  
Westgate House, Westgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1PS

**Responsible individual:** Anne Tully

**Registered manager:** Guy Greenwood

## Inspector

Jane Titley: social care inspector

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