

SC033457

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority. The home is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's and young people's liberty.

The children's home can accommodate up to 24 children who are aged between 10 and 17 years old. It provides for up to 14 children or young people placed by the Youth Custody Service and 10 children or young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, and who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any child under 13 years of age under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 24 November 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people , taking into account	outstanding
Children's education and learning	outstanding
Children's health	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

outstanding

The secure 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: 7 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Full	Good
24/04/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/10/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/05/2018	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress because of the strong and well-coordinated multi-agency approach adopted by care staff, health staff and education staff. Effective communication systems and meetings between these key staff ensure that comprehensive but adaptable plans can be implemented swiftly to meet children's needs. Consequently, children benefit from the collaborative effort and support to help them to move forward.

Children continually say that the best thing about living at this home is the caring and supportive staff who look after them. Acting on the children's views and opinions are embedded in practice. Children's views are valued and promoted. The advocate for the service gives high praise and recognition of this. Children are listened to and influence how their home is run. For example, they take an active role in interviewing prospective staff and can effect changes in routines and reward systems as well as influencing menus and choices of activities.

The importance of family contact is acknowledged by staff. Every effort has been made during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that children maintain contact with their families and loved ones. This has been achieved via various methods, such as the use of virtual meetings and telephone calls. With staff support, children have displayed considerable resilience during this time. They understand the additional restrictions in place and have coped exceptionally well with these.

Children know how to make a complaint and raise any concerns that they have through the 'Can I have a word, please?' system. Managers and staff respond swiftly to these. Action and resulting practice changes are made when appropriate and managers make sure that children are satisfied that their concerns have been dealt with to their satisfaction.

Each child's admission to the home is managed sensitively to help them settle and be reassured about living in this home. Due to the pandemic, children have undergone periods of isolation prior to joining their peers, pending COVID-19 testing, to ensure that they do not have the virus. These isolation periods have been a challenge and have been upsetting for the children. During these periods, the staff make every effort to ensure that they provide entertaining activities to keep the children stimulated and occupied. Furthermore, staff make sure that children have access to regular fresh air and time outside during the isolation period.

Staff passionately advocate on behalf of children if this is needed. They make appropriate challenges to local authorities to ensure that children have suitable placements identified for them to move on to. This is an area of strength and shows staff determination and commitment to helping children to move forward positively.

Children say that they have plenty to do, and enjoy a variety of activities in the evenings, weekends and school holidays. This has continued even with the restrictions of the pandemic. These activities enrich the children's experiences and also help them to develop relationships, tolerance and social skills with peers and adults.

Inspectors observed a calm atmosphere, hearing the laughter and seeing the children smiling and being at ease with each other and with staff. Staff were observed to be alert to children's needs and provided timely, sensitive support when this was needed. This helps children to develop their own strategies to cope with the potential demands of communal living and integrate into a home's culture of respect and acceptance.

Children's education and learning: outstanding

Throughout the periods of COVID-19 restrictions, leaders and managers ensured that the education provision remained open. During this time, children were able to access their full entitlement to education. Until very recently, children attended their lessons with peers from their residential units to mitigate the risk of infection. Pre-COVID-19 education activities have now resumed.

Leaders and managers conducted a full and highly effective review of the education curriculum. They subsequently designed and implemented, with detailed input from education staff, a curriculum that balances academic subjects such as English, mathematics and science alongside vocational subjects including motor vehicle studies, food technology, hairdressing and barbering. The curriculum is highly successful in helping children to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to realise their ambitions for employment and learning or in developing their independence.

Leaders have thought carefully about the vocational curriculum. They have considered national skills needs and the interests of the children. For example, the children requested painting and decorating courses as part of the construction skills offer. Leaders identified this as a skills shortage area and introduced a painting and decorating course alongside a Construction Skills Certificate Scheme safety card course to provide children with enhanced opportunities for progression into employment, apprenticeships or further study on their release.

Classrooms are bright, welcoming and decorated with displays of the children's work, and the children are rightly proud of this work. Children treat their learning environments with great care and respect. They work safely and competently in the well-equipped practical workshops, adopting the behaviours expected in industry, for example when using the tools in the construction workshop.

Teachers and instructors use extended assessments of children's starting points. The close and frequent monitoring of progress means that children make good and often exceptional progress. They make excellent progress in English, mathematics and science, with a few children achieving GCSE qualifications. Most children, many of

whom arrive at the home without any educational achievements, successfully complete accredited qualifications in vocational subjects such as music, food hygiene, sports leaders' award and information technology.

Children with additional learning needs receive tailored and sensitive support from teachers, instructors and support staff. Leaders and managers work closely with specialists such as speech and language therapists to develop strategies that teachers and instructors can use with children in lessons. Children say that the highly individualised support they receive from teachers and from staff helps them to focus on their studies and achieve their learning goals.

Teachers plan highly innovative and exciting activities that enthuse children and motivate them to succeed. For example, in music production, children teach each other the skills needed to successfully record a track with music and vocals.

The quality of feedback that children receive from teachers and instructors is of a very high quality and helps children to continuously improve the quality of their work. Careful and precise assessment and recording of children's knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours ensures that children know more, remember more and can do more during their time at the home.

Many children have not been in education before arriving at the home and often initially display negative attitudes and behaviours to learning. Staff provide excellent levels of support to help children to quickly settle and establish positive behaviours with regard to their learning. Children rapidly build their resilience, respect their teachers and peers and develop highly effective relationships with staff and other children. Children say that they enjoy their studies and attendance at lessons is very high.

Children participate in a wide range of enrichment activities that develop their personal and social skills, such as cookery, music production in the recording studio and, when COVID-19 restrictions permit, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Education staff and the care staff work collaboratively to ensure that children can access the full range of enrichment activities.

Children receive comprehensive independent, impartial careers advice and guidance that helps them to make informed and realistic decisions about their next steps. For example, children have a thorough understanding of the most appropriate college courses and apprenticeships available to them on their release.

Leaders and managers work closely with children to gather their views through 'student voice' activities. The junior leadership team, a group of children elected by their peers, meets frequently with senior leaders to discuss the quality of education. Children report that they have a strong voice and state that their suggestions are always considered and often acted upon.

Children's health: good

Healthcare services are provided by Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is subcontracted to lead on mental health and well-being support. Both teams are linked to the healthcare service at a nearby Her Majesty's Young Offender Institution, with some cross-working and management oversight.

The healthcare staff have continued to provide safe care to the children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including the use of remote consultation during outbreaks. The pandemic has impacted on opportunities for healthcare staff to develop relationships with children and care staff at times, although this is improving as restrictions ease. Children said that they are happy with the care they receive from healthcare staff.

The 'Secure Stairs' integrated care framework is well embedded in the home. Partnership working between the healthcare providers and the home is excellent, particularly when supporting the most vulnerable children. Regular formulation meetings have continued during the pandemic, and work is ongoing to promote children's voices in formulation, to regularly involve parents in planning, and to improve the transition process. Training on 'Secure Stairs' and reflective practice sessions for care staff has been impacted by the pandemic, although some bite-size training continued and face-to-face training has now been reinstated.

The children's health and well-being needs are reviewed promptly through comprehensive health assessments on arrival, which informs ongoing care. Healthcare staff regularly review children who have recently arrived at the home and are isolating due to the risks of COVID-19 to help keep them safe.

The children can see a physical health nurse daily and a GP weekly, with flexibility for urgent needs. The clinic room is clean and well maintained, with robust infection control measures in place. Appropriate emergency equipment is available, and regular safety and equipment checks are completed. A range of visiting health professionals have continued to visit the home during the pandemic, using triage to identify need and prioritise care. The healthcare provider is working with commissioners to address a current gap in optician services.

Workers from the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Support Service are now allocated to the home, which has improved its ability to provide support and education to children with substance misuse needs. The team is currently developing the service to enhance the support available to the children.

The child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) team provides individualised care to the children, with a strong focus on safety through regulation and stabilisation. The members of the team are passionate about the care they deliver and have a high level of expertise.

The children receive individual therapy and a range of cognitive and neurodisability assessments when appropriate. A psychiatrist visits the home weekly to provide additional clinical oversight. Staffing of the team has improved, with a mental health practitioner now assigned to each unit, including education. There is also a new team manager and a recently recruited learning disability practitioner and occupational therapist. This enhances the level of support available for the children.

All care staff are trained to safely administer medicines to children in the home and support the children effectively with this. Storage and record-keeping arrangements for medicines are very good. There are effective systems in place to monitor medicines management, including regular audits and healthcare oversight. There have been no recent medicines incidents.

There are good governance processes in place for healthcare services, including regular governance meetings, audits and contract reporting, which have continued during the pandemic. Incidents are thoroughly investigated, and learning is used to inform improvements to the service.

Regular healthcare meetings have continued during the pandemic, with effective use of remote access. Healthcare staff receive regular clinical supervision, although managerial supervision and induction processes are not consistent in the CAMHS team and work is ongoing to improve this. A project is under way to help staff to improve record-keeping on the clinical recording system.

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

Children's safety is paramount in this home. Staff swiftly develop an awareness and understanding of each child's vulnerabilities and strengths. Close multidisciplinary working and collaboration ensure that strategies are fully considered and then implemented thoughtfully. Each child's well-being is seen as central to any planning or staff intervention.

Detailed and individualised plans and guidelines inform staff approaches and help children develop self-control, resilience and an ability to learn new coping strategies. Research is used to underpin and inform how staff respond to children's behaviours and needs. Children's progress in this area of their development is significant.

The use of physical restraint is carefully considered and used appropriately. Staff display considerable skill and sensitivity when managing some very difficult and volatile situations. Records show that the child's well-being and safety are monitored closely and carefully promoted. Staff conduct is seen to be diligent, patient and conscientious in some extremely demanding situations. The use of body-worn cameras provides an extra layer of protection for children and staff. This has also enabled the manager to undertake detailed analysis and learning from some of the extreme challenges that children and staff have faced. Staff practice observed during the inspection was seen to be compassionate and sensitive. The support given to extremely distressed children is exemplary.

The use of 'single separation' and 'managing away' is appropriate and in line with regulations. Records and observations of these measures demonstrate that children are kept safe and supported when these are used. Managers continually scrutinise these measures to ensure that they are proportionate, and that each period is regularly reviewed to ensure that the child is reintegrated back into the group as soon as it is safe to do so.

Children receive individualised support from a variety of professionals to enable them to reflect on their past experiences. This support can be in areas such as anger management, substance misuse, offending behaviours and the management of painful emotions that arise from past traumatic events. This helps children to learn to trust the adults caring for them and to develop insight into alternative coping strategies.

Each child has specific risk assessment plans which are clear with regard to the levels of checks they need when apart from the group. The vast majority are successfully implemented. There have been two occasions when checks have been delayed. In these cases, managers took swift action to address these shortfalls. Managers sample records of checks and cross-reference these with CCTV coverage. This helps to ensure that there is no complacency.

Recruitment of new staff is thorough. All necessary background checks are carried out and there is a psychological assessment of new recruits to ensure that they have appropriate skills and resilience. Children are involved in the recruitment process and their feedback is seen to be perceptive and given value.

Staff know what to do and whom to inform if they have concerns about a child's well-being or safety. There are clear guidelines for them to follow and managers liaise with appropriate agencies to share concerns and implement plans to promote the children's safety. Feedback from external agencies is very positive, especially with the transparency and willingness to share information and promote children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a united drive from managers and staff to improve the lives of children and to ensure that they thrive, are protected from harm and stay safe. This is seen in practice with the excellent levels of thought and consideration given to each child's care plan. Close multidisciplinary work ensures a cohesive approach in which the child's well-being and development are paramount. Consequently, care plans and strategies can be swiftly amended and changed if a child's circumstances dictate a need for this.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, staff have been able to maintain their knowledge and skills through internet training and ongoing support from colleagues and managers. The vast majority of staff receive regular supervision and on the whole, records of these sessions are of a very good quality. Nevertheless, a small

proportion of the sessions are not recorded in enough detail to ensure that staff performance has been adequately assessed and audited. Although this has not impacted on the well-being or safety of children, these records need to be completed more effectively.

The registered manager has exceptional support from a core team of other managers. This means that he has excellent insight into areas of strength and areas in which to develop the service. Any shortfalls identified through well-established monitoring systems are rectified promptly. For example, auditing of checks of children who are away from the group identifies any gaps and explores reasons for this. There is an established culture of high expectations of staff conduct and performance. This filters down to the children, who enjoy the support of adults who are ambitious for them and strive to help them make significant progress and to enjoy success.

Stakeholders, including parents, social workers and other professionals, speak highly of the efforts made by staff to help children move forward in their lives. Information is shared promptly and managers and staff vigorously advocate on behalf of children, especially with regards to planning transitions to their next placement. This strengthens trust on the part of the children and their belief that members of staff will stand up for them.

Difference and diversity are welcomed and enjoyed. There is a strong and established culture of respect and acceptance. Staff provide strong role models for the children and their tolerance and patience, underpinned with kindness and humour, ensure that the children feel accepted and safe, often for the first time in their lives. This strong basis enables children to make significant and sustainable progress.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. In particular, ensure that checks of children away from the group are maintained in line with the timescales identified in their risk assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- The registered person should ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33 (4) (b)). In particular, ensure that supervision records are sufficiently detailed and accurate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

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'.

For inspections of secure children's homes, Ofsted is assisted by inspectors from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in Ofsted's evaluation of health services provided for children (authorised by HMCI under section 31 of the Care Standards Act 2000).

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC033457

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds LS1 1UR

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Registered manager: Francis N'Jie

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