

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 owned and managed by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty.

The home can care for up to 24 children aged between 5 and 18 years. It provides care for up to 14 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to 10 children under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities.

Admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age 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.

There were 21 children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspectors were aware that a serious incident occurred at the setting immediately prior to this inspection and is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the initial actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 June 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	good

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The secure children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
06/10/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2021	Full	Outstanding
07/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy spending time with staff. Staff build and sustain supportive relationships with each child. In turn, children begin to understand why they are in a secure home and develop new strategies and coping mechanisms that help them to make better decisions.

Children said that they feel safe, and spoke positively about their experiences of living in the home. They said that they get along well with staff and that they are kept busy and occupied so that they do not get bored. There is a range of enrichment activities offered each day after school and during the school holidays. The staff give children positive experiences and opportunities that will stay with them when they leave the home.

The environment of the home is warm and welcoming. Children's achievements, their artwork and themed murals are displayed throughout the home. The home celebrates diversity and this is also reflected in the workforce. This gives children a sense of belonging during their stay at this secure home.

Children's admissions to the home are well-considered, and managers ensure that they have sufficient information available to meet the immediate needs of any new child. Formulation and placement planning meetings help staff to identify risk factors and areas to focus on. This approach builds the foundations for targeted work to start soon after the child arrives.

Staff engage the children in regular key-work conversations. The quality of the recording of these conversations varies. Generally, records are brief and do not always capture the views of the children. While this has not had a direct impact on children's care, this shortfall does not enable children to reflect back on these discussions.

Children influence the running of the home through the junior leadership meetings. A representative from each house attends these meetings and it is a way to seek feedback and address any concerns, requests or suggestions that children may have. In contrast, the general children's meetings do not have the same commitment, and children's engagement is limited.

Children know how to make a complaint and tend to use the 'can I have a word' process to raise any issues. Most complaints are low level however all complaints are treated with the same level of scrutiny and in most cases are acknowledged and responded to quickly. This gives children confidence that they are able to raise any concerns or issues that they may have.

Staff help and support children when they are preparing to leave the home, whether they are moving back into the community or to another secure provision. Close

partnership working between managers, staff, children's social workers and other professionals, facilitates effective multi-agency working. This helps children to feel better supported when they move on.

Feedback from parents and other professionals is overwhelmingly positive about the support and care provided to children, and the good relationships between staff and children. One parent said, 'My daughter has the support and services she needs and a brilliant team around her.'

Children's education and learning: good

Children enjoy positive relationships with education staff. Staff take time to get to know the children well and adapt their teaching to meet children's needs. Teachers ensure that all children have their educational needs assessed promptly at the start of their placement. They consider children's prior attainment, using a wide range of assessments to accurately identify children's starting points, and use this information to plan personalised learning programmes for children.

Teachers monitor children's progress closely and meet with them weekly to review this. Teachers and learning support assistants use effective teaching strategies to help children to catch up if they fall behind in their learning.

The education department remains in a period of transition and relies on agency learning assistants. Learning support assistants report that they teach too many sessions because of staff sickness. This results in some variation in the quality of education across different subjects. Learning support assistants are not always clear about their roles. New processes and procedures to address this issue have been introduced since the last inspection, although these are not yet fully embedded.

The consistency and quality of teachers' written feedback on children's work differs across subjects. In some instances, teachers do not adequately assess children's work, or provide children with cursory feedback such as 'well done' or a tick. Children do not always know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve the quality and content of their work.

Most children enjoy their learning. They value their time in education and staff work skilfully to ensure children incrementally increase their knowledge and skills. Children also benefit from a varied enrichment programme. For example, they work with graffiti artists to develop their creative skills. Consequently, children rapidly improve their skills and develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Teaching and support staff manage children's behaviour well. They consistently address unacceptable behaviour, such as the use of inappropriate language, and challenge these behaviours competently and sensitively. This helps to effectively de-escalate the situation.

Children receive appropriate careers information. Staff work closely with further education and skills providers locally and nationally to ensure that children can make

informed decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment, when transitioning from the home.

Children's health: good

Children have good access to an appropriate range of health services on site including a nurse-led service during the working week, to assess and meet their health needs. Other services are provided by a range of visiting professionals such as a dentist and an optician. All children are seen by a speech, language and communication therapist and substance misuse worker.

The healthcare team are experienced in their roles and focus on improving health outcomes for each child during their placement in the home. Work with children centres around meeting their individual physical and emotional health needs. This gives children a secure base that supports their development in other areas of their lives, including positive relationships and education.

Children benefit from partnership working between the healthcare team, education staff and care staff. Together these disciplines identify children's health needs, devise suitable plans and deliver services to meet these needs. When required, the healthcare team provide education staff and care staff with additional training to help them to respond to children's emotional needs effectively.

Leaders ensure that governance processes in place to monitor the delivery of health services are effective. There is a rolling programme of auditing to underpin service development and respond to children's changing needs. However on two occasions the healthcare team were not informed about significant incidents involving children in a timely manner. This may impact on when relevant health advice is given to ensure that children are safe and have not been harmed.

Healthcare staff receive regular supervision and most have completed all mandatory training. However, not all staff who administer medication are in date with their training or have an up-to-date competency assessment. Furthermore, the transportation of medication around the home needs to ensure that medication is stored securely and at the correct temperature.

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

The majority of children are settled and this creates a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the home. There has been a significant reduction in serious incidents and the use of restrictive measures of control since the last inspection. For those children currently struggling to manage their anxieties and frustrations, staff mostly support these children well, helping them to find alternative ways to manage their own behaviour.

Leaders and managers have taken action to strengthen monitoring systems in place to support managers' reviews of children's safety and protection. This includes improvements in the use of CCTV to review physical restraints and an additional

layer of scrutiny when children are locked in their bedrooms or kept separately from their peers. In most instances these improvements mean that any practice shortfalls are addressed quickly by managers. However, CCTV footage of all physical restraints is not reviewed in a timely manner, with a recent incident not being reviewed for over 48 hours.

The use of sanctions, physical restraints, single separation and managing away incidents have reduced overall. Some single separation records and documents do not demonstrate clearly enough that incidents are reviewed by managers as required.

Children's individual risk assessments include all relevant information on the risks and vulnerabilities for each child. In most cases these detailed documents provides staff with guidance on how to keep children safe. However, there are some omissions with regard to protecting children's dignity during incidents when they are at a significant risk of immediate harm, and it may be necessary to remove the child's clothing to prevent serious and life-threatening self-harm. While staff spoken to were able to verbalise how they would respond in these circumstances, this shortfall means that managers cannot be fully assured that all staff understand what is expected of them.

There are well established security checks and building maintenance checks in place. The home strikes a balance between providing a homely and welcoming environment for children with the necessities of maintaining a safe and secure setting, and reducing and managing risks to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers across care, education and health work in partnership to support children in all aspects of their lives. This promotes a greater understanding of how children's needs and vulnerabilities can be met. It helps children to move forward and have aspirations for their future.

Since the last inspection there has been a continuous journey of improvement with clear development plans to improve children's outcomes and their experiences. The manager arranges regular team development days to give staff the opportunity to reflect and discuss practice issues. This approach promotes a shared ownership and consistency in caring for children.

Children's case file records, the recording of key work sessions and the quality of incident reporting is inconsistent and at times of poor quality. These records do not always clearly reflect children's time in the home, include all relevant details and information or consistently include children's views and feedback. Furthermore, in some records, the language used is subjective and stigmatising, and not in line with the homes policies on record keeping. This undermines the positive work done with the children and does not reflect the good quality of the individualised care and support that children receive. Children are not consistently encouraged to look back on the work they have done and the progress they have made.

Staff now receive regular supervision sessions. Management oversight and auditing has seen a marked improvement in the quality and recording of these sessions. Staff now benefit from more reflective and performance led supervision that better supports their professional development. Staff training is a priority for leaders and managers. New 'bitesize' learning sessions mean that staff are able to confidently respond to children's changing and often complex needs, and quickly adapt their practice when necessary.

Leaders and managers establish constructive relationships with professionals and with each child's local authority. These emphasise and promote partnership working and help to improve outcomes for children during their placement and when they leave the home. Feedback from professionals and parents is positive; this recognises how children benefit from spending time in this home. Managers advocate for the children and present appropriate levels of challenge when external parties do not fulfil their duties. This ensures that children's progress and development is prioritised.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)</p>	<p>31 July 20223</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. In particular, school leaders should ensure that teachers and classroom-based assistants are clear about their roles. In addition teachers need to give children effective feedback to support their learning. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person should ensure that children in secure children’s homes are only placed in single separation when necessary to prevent injury to any person (including for example, the child who is being restrained) or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person (including the child who is being restrained). A record should be made and kept of all uses of single separation in secure children’s homes (regulation 17 of The Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991). In particular, records should include details of when these

incidents are reviewed in line with the home's policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.65)

- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and transport medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. In particular, that staff are up to date with medication training and competency assessments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that key working sessions are detailed and capture both staff and children's contributions. Children should be supported to read and contribute to their records. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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'.

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

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Francis N'Jie

Inspectors

Catherine Sikakana, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Debbie Holder, Social Care Inspector

Debbie Foster, Social Care Inspector

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, His Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

Cat Raycraft, Health and Justice Inspector, Care Quality Commission

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