

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC037986
<b>Inspector</b>	Emeline Evans
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
<b>Registered person address</b>	Easthampstead House Town Square BRACKNELL Berkshire RG12 1AQ
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Sonia Johnson
<b>Registered manager</b>	Samantha Jane Whitehouse
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	10/03/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	05/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	outstanding

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>outstanding</b>
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Young people receive high quality care and support from a dedicated staff team at this short break service. The enthusiasm and commitment from the staff contribute to this outstanding provision. The quality of care is highly personalised and effective in providing a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. The home has a relaxed atmosphere, and behavioural problems are rare with minimum focus on restraint and no use of sanctions. Staff are very skilled at managing young people in a positive manner.

Exceptional relationships exist between young people and staff. The long-serving stable committed staff team understand the needs of the young people extremely well. This enables young people to grow in confidence and develop as independent individuals. Young people enjoy and have access to a range of stimulating activities.

Seeking the views of young people and providing them with choice as much as possible is integral to how the unit operates. The leadership and management of this home draw upon monitoring systems, the views of young people, their parents and professionals to raise standards and further improve practice. Parents and professionals are very satisfied with this service and welcome the willingness of the manager and team to adapt to meet individual needs. Three recommendations have been made. These have no direct impact on the safety or welfare of young people.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is a short-break unit which provides day care, and residential short breaks for five children and young people with learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by a local council.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2014	Interim	good progress
12/11/2013	Full	good
07/01/2013	Interim	good progress
16/08/2012	Full	outstanding

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

#### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children's individual needs are identified within placement plans, this specifically relates to the reason for the use of a therapeutic bed (NMS 2.3)
- ensure there is a clear written policy in place which sets out how the home will safeguard all children and young people from abuse and neglect (Statutory guidance, vol 5, para 2.67)
- risk assess in writing the location of the freezer in the kitchen area to identify any potential sources of harm to children and young people. (NMS 10.8)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Outcomes for young people accessing the service are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy their stays and have positive and constructive relationships with the staff who care for them. Parents and professionals report high levels of satisfaction, with comments such as, 'all children are made to feel very welcome and at home' and 'it's a good time for her to become more independent.' Young people have a planned transition into this service; this assists them in becoming familiar with the staff and the environment before their first overnight stay. Parents and carers are fully involved with this transition process and provide key information about their child's needs, wishes and routines. This ensures that young people receive continuity of care.

Young people make excellent progress, through attending this short break service, in developing their personal and social skills. This contributes to them gaining in confidence and working towards a target in order that they can move on to the next goal. Ladders of achievement are used for young people and to meet some young people's needs these have been adapted into sensory ladders. These achievements are celebrated; this enables young people to take pride in their accomplishments and contributes to enhancing self-esteem.

Social activity is being successfully encouraged and young people enjoy participating in a wide range of activities, both within the home and in the community. A fun day in London and a trip to the local fire brigade are examples of this. Young people are able to choose activities they would like to try and this enables them to feel they are listened to and have an influence in the running of the home.

Young people benefit from staff that give their health needs the highest priority. Healthy living, including a well-balanced diet and exercise, are all important aspects of the young person's stay at the unit. Young people are encouraged, and have developed a greater range of healthy eating choices as a result of going to the unit.

Young people achieve excellent school attendance and staff provide valuable support in enabling them to do so. Close working relationships with schools and other involved professionals help to ensure a consistency of approach that benefits young people greatly and contributes effectively to the delivery of high quality care. A strength of this service is the extent to which young people are given choices and consulted about their short break experience. This ensures full participation and involves young people with decision making. The staff hold a range of communication skills to assist consultation, and they are resourceful and creative. One parent commented, 'staff have made their own set of symbols for use with her when she attends, they have made big efforts to understand her little ways and non-verbal communication.' This approach promotes and maximises independence.

Young people develop good relationships with the staff and low turnover within the team ensures that consistency of care is provided. Young people achieve excellent outcomes because of the commitment and determination of the staff team. The staff are very imaginative and proactive in finding ways to support young people with development relating to their health, education, social skills and behaviour.

### **Quality of care**

### **outstanding**

The unit offers an outstanding service and quality of care to young people and their families. This is mainly due to the excellent relationships that exist between young people and staff. The staff team place the well-being of individuals at the centre of their practice. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the needs of all the young people which was echoed by parents and social workers alike. The nurturing, fun and supportive staff enable young people to behave in a positive and appropriate manner. It is clearly evident that young people enjoy and benefit from being in the company of the staff team. Young people said 'the staff are great.'

Ascertaining the views of the young people is central to the way in which the staff team work. Young people's views are gained on all areas involved in their care and stay at the unit. Staff clearly document any views and observations of the young people in the shift information. This is then shared in team meetings. Staff are extremely tuned in to young people's emotional well-being. Although a young person may not make a formal complaint, if a young person appeared unhappy staff immediately advocate on their behalf. Parents were highly complementary about the staff team and the regular open communication that exists to ensure that young people's welfare is given the highest priority. The views of families are constantly ascertained to ensure that excellent standards of care are in place.

The home provides a healthy environment where some young people with health needs are well cared for and staff work closely with the health professionals involved with individual young people. The arrangements for the management and administration of medication are safe and effective. Staff have received training in the safe administration of medication and this includes competency checks of their practice. Any medication issues are promptly referred, managed, and investigated to ensure that young people's welfare is maintained, although this is a rare occurrence.

Each young person has a highly personalised care plan. Plans in place were seen to be detailed and to provide for the delivery of personalised care in accordance with individual young people's needs. Plans are monitored closely by designated key workers and are regularly reviewed. Staff work very closely with external professionals to ensure they provide safe and appropriate care for young people.

Young people's interaction and social skills are developed through a range of varied and purposeful activities. Good use is made of the resources and facilities the service has to offer including sensory play and outside play equipment. The home is situated

in a residential area within easy reach of local facilities. Young people enjoy their stays in a safe and pleasant environment. The home has appropriate specialist equipment to ensure the individual needs of the young people accessing the service are met, such as adapted baths and ceiling hoists. However, some care planning and risk assessment documents require additional information to ensure they highlight the reasons why certain measures are used. This specifically relates to the use of a therapeutic bed and to ensure this documentation includes individual recommendations from specialists such as occupational therapists.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    good**

Parents and social workers say that their children's safety is given a high priority within the home. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and they recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the needs of children and young people with disabilities. One parent commented, 'I feel confident and relaxed that my son is being well cared for and is in a secure environment.'

The supervision provided by good staffing levels minimises the risk of young people going missing. Procedures are known by staff if this situation should arise. This ensures prompt action can be taken and liaison with the police is undertaken to secure the safety of any missing child or young person. The staff are knowledgeable about the particular vulnerabilities of the young people and have a range of effective risk assessment documents to reduce known risks. This ensures young people can take part in activities within the home, and outside, with measures in place to keep them safe. However, a chest freezer is currently in use within the kitchen. Young people are supervised in this area and within the course of the inspection, a lock was fitted. There is not presently a risk assessment in place to support this.

Young people feel safe and well cared for. They have very good relationships with staff who understand and recognise changes in behaviours. This knowledge enables staff to identify and act upon instances when a young person is worried or upset. There is currently a range of safeguarding policies which do not all link together. This does not enable staff to have clear guidelines on the correct procedures to follow if they had concerns. However, staff spoken to were clear on their responsibilities in this area. Young people are successfully encouraged to develop positive behaviours and staff are highly skilled in managing any behaviours which are challenging. The service promotes strong behaviour management strategies with a positive culture of managing behaviour. De-escalation and diversionary tactics are employed, sanctions are not used and praise and encouragement is evident. The service closely monitors the use of measures of control and discipline, and this scrutiny ensures that trends and patterns are monitored and care plans are adjusted accordingly. They work very closely with behaviour specialists and professionals if there are any emerging concerns around behaviours.

This organisation adopts a robust procedure to employ new staff following safer

recruitment practices; this ensures young people are only cared for by adults that have been checked as suitable. There is a rigorous approach to health and safety matters, fire detection and prevention. This is underpinned by policies, procedures and training that alert staff to their roles and levels of responsibility. As a result, young people benefit from a safe environment and this has a positive impact on their welfare.

## **Leadership and management**

## **outstanding**

Young people benefit from a service that is exceptionally well managed. The Registered Manager has been in post in the children's home since November 2007 and holds a NVQ level 4 management qualification. She has the necessary experience to provide strong and effective leadership.

The experienced management team ensures the staff team continually strive for development and improvement. The home now has a service development officer in post. She is working with the team to look at the development of the home and a comprehensive development plan has been formulated. Targets are challenging and build on the strengths of the service. The management team are embracing these new ideas and there is an overwhelming enthusiasm to further improve outcomes for young people.

The Registered Manager ensures that the home is well organised and staffed to provide young people with stability and consistency of care. This is evident from a stable staff team and the low level of agency staff used. The home is currently recruiting to a vacant position and so is using a small group of agency staff, these staff are well known to the young people. Thoughtful attention is given to short break allocation, and considers staffing levels and skills to meet the needs of the young people.

The manager is keen to promote the service and strives for continual improvement. The staff are kept up-to-date with new legislation and practice developments. The manager ensures that the home fulfils its commitment to young people as laid out in the statement of purpose and children's guide. The home's Statement of Purpose has recently been updated in line with changes to regulation. This information is supplemented by the children's 'welcome guide' which is available in a DVD format. This ensures all young people are aware of what to expect when visiting the home.

There has been one complaint raised by a young person since the last inspection. This was actioned promptly. The home has further promoted young people's welfare by fully meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. The home now has a policy on the use of monitoring devices. In addition, they have added signs on bedroom walls to indicate to the young people if monitors are in use. This ensures young people are kept fully informed of all aspects of their care. Parents reported the excellent and open communication enables them to raise any concerns or issues.

However, parents are overwhelmingly happy with the support their children receive and as yet have not had to raise a concern. This demonstrates that staff work closely and positively with young people's families.

Staff turnover is very low which is beneficial for children and young people who respond well to stability and predictability. The staff team are dedicated and demonstrate energy, enthusiasm and creativity in improving young people's lives. Staff confirm that they are provided effective training, support and supervision which enables young people's needs to be successfully met.

The service is monitored and is subject to regular internal auditing by the manager and external scrutiny by other professionals. Any areas requiring attention are highlighted in reports and are addressed appropriately and include focused attention on young people. Regular staff meetings ensure any shortfalls are communicated promptly with staff acting to rectify any issues highlighted.



## What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.