

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC030713
Inspector	James Harmon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Wokingham Borough Council
Registered person address	Wokingham District Council PO Box 154 WOKINGHAM Berkshire RG40 1WN
Responsible individual	Christine Buckman
Registered manager	David James Green
Date of last inspection	18/02/2014

Inspection date	30/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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The short break service staff are exceptional at understanding the needs of children and young people. The staff provide are excellent at ensuring young people are safe and benefit from a nurturing environment that promotes positives outcomes. Young people present as safe, happy and confident. Young people are treated as individuals and respected which progresses their development.

Through individualised planning, an experienced staff team is able to effectively communicate with children and young people to ensure their views are obtained which is then incorporated into their care plans. The service is able to meet the needs of young people through activities and one-to-one care.

Parents, social workers and other professionals are all in agreement that young people's experiences at the short break service has a positive impact on their ability to interact socially, improve in their abilities and developing self-confidence. Professionals and parents speak highly of the staff and believe that their experiences are of great help to young people. The majority of the staff have over ten years' experience in this work.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is a resource centre for children with disabilities and their families and is owned and managed by the local district council. One of the services offered at the centre is residential short break care for children with a disability. It is this aspect of the centre's activity that is regulated under the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The centre is registered for five young people aged between eight and 17 years who have a learning and/or physical disability; many of the children also present challenging behaviour. Other services offered include day care, after school care, outreach services and a domiciliary care service registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2014	Interim	good progress
11/09/2013	Full	outstanding
11/02/2013	Interim	good progress
17/09/2012	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children and young people make significant progress when utilising the short break service. They engage in a wide range of activities which assist in their development of skills which can be incorporated into their home life while developing their self-confidence.

Children and young people form positive relationships with the staff, due to receiving positive nurturing in a stable environment. A parent stated that coming to the short break service has helped their child become 'very calm, and sociable while getting used to letting different people care for them'. Another parent said their child struggled with interacting with other adults and young people but has formed positive relationships at the service since attending and now gets excited and happy when going to the service.

Children and young people enjoy great health while utilising the short break service; detailed attention is paid to their individual diets and health needs. Healthy meals are prepared in accordance with the input of the parents; the effectively implemented medication policy ensures that all medication is logged and administered without incident.

Learning and development for young people is supported and encouraged through excellent well-maintained links with education. One staff member is also employed by the local school which allows insights into a young person's behaviour and difficulties to be communicated effectively while being assessed.

Quality of care **outstanding**

Young people receive outstanding care from a stable, experienced child focused staff. Highly positive relationships exist between young people and staff which are developed through one-to-one care. The staff team is highly skilled and experienced; they are able to recognize the triggers for young people to prevent any emotional or behavioural difficulties that may impact their care. A placing social worker said, 'the service has excellent staff, who are very dedicated and know the children that access the service.'

The staff are able to clearly demonstrate an extensive knowledge of the individualised needs of the young people and use creative ways to communicate with them. Young people are routinely cared for in line with their individual care plans. A professional said, 'staff are at excellent service at thinking outside the box in regards to young people'.

Every young person benefits from the staff preparing in advance for their arrival, for example at daily staff handovers advanced planning is undertaken in which a staff member is assigned to a young person while taking into account the young person's health, and physical needs.

Young people are able to participate in wide range of activities that allow young people to express their individual difference while promoting interactions. Activities in the home include use of a sensory room, and soft play area. Activities outside the home include bowling, theatres, and community parks.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

The service does an excellent job of safeguarding children and young people. Highly detailed assessments are in place that cover all aspects of risk to the children and young people while using the service.

Children and young people do not go missing from the service and there have been no referrals to the local authority. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place for the service to follow should these issues arise. A parent confirmed that, 'the short break service provides the feeling that their child is safe and well cared for, which in turn allows a parent to relax and not worry, which assist parents in caring for their children.'

Risk management strategies labelled as opportunity assessments are robust and in place. This assesses several individual risks to the children and young people which include (but is not limited to) outdoor activities, off site activities, number of staff needed, manual handling and personal care. This allows children and young people the opportunity to safely and successfully participate in activities that may otherwise be considered a risk based upon their complex needs.

Sanctions are not imposed unless absolutely necessary. The experienced staff team is well trained in physical intervention and only utilises it when absolutely necessary. When physical restraints are used, there is detailed process of reflection and recording. Well documented positive handling plans also ensure that young people are not subject to unnecessary physical intervention.

The environment of the service is physically safe and secure and carefully takes into account the individual needs of the children and young people. Routine health and safety checks are undertaken, and a strong audit trail evidenced.

Leadership and management **outstanding**

The Registered Manager is a qualified and registered social worker with many years of experience and knowledge in meeting the needs of the children and young people that use the breakaway service. The Registered Manager has been in this post for four years and provides consistent, stable and effective leadership. A staff member said, 'the Registered Manager is hands on, approachable and always has children's best interest at heart.'

Views of the children and young people are incorporated into the way the service is administered. Efficient ways to obtain the views of non-verbal children and young people are being developed so that the service is reflected accordingly.

The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weakness of the short break service and continues to develop innovative ways to improve and expand the service. The short break service's statement of purpose is detailed and reflects current practices. A robust forward thinking development plan is being actioned.

Working in partnership is a high priority: parents and professionals expressed the view that the staff and management team communicate extremely well about young people. One professional said, 'communication is one of the strongest point of the staff and management team'.

The management team supports an experienced and committed staff team by providing supervision, annual appraisals and on-going training. Team meetings are held on a monthly basis, which ensure staff are familiar with, and effectively implement, the aims and objectives of the short break service. Minutes from the meetings are reviewed and signed off by staff. The consistency and experience of staff is one of the strongest points of the service; the current team has been in place for two years.

A detailed system allows management to monitor young people's care and outcomes effectively. This includes six monthly reviews and file audits. Management also oversees that all incidents and complaints involving young people are recorded as reportable events.

Young people benefit from the short break service being adequately resourced and maintained to a high standard. The physical environment promotes positive, safe interaction with young people.

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.

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