

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>25/08/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC037986</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Bracknell Forest Borough Council</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Easthampstead House, Town Square, BRACKNELL, Berkshire, RG12 1AQ</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Sonia Johnson</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Samantha Whitehouse</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Chris Peel</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>25/08/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Sustained effectiveness</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

**SC037986**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is outstanding because:**

- The home extends a warm welcome to all who come through its doors; an atmosphere generated by everyone from auxiliary staff to the manager.
- When professionals and parents talk about children and young people's experiences of the home the phrase 'she loves it' or 'he loves it' is used with remarkable frequency. It reflects the drive to ensure breaks are enriching for each child and the empathetic approach taken by staff to achieve it.
- This is matched by the high level of confidence families have in the service and in the team who provide it. One mother said, 'We have never met a member of staff who we have not thought is wonderful', adding, 'I trust them implicitly with my child.'
- Enormous effort is made to enable children and young people to communicate, with some notable successes, such as a girl using photographs for the first time to indicate the toy she wanted.
- The same level of thought is given to helping children and young people overcome obstacles to daily living. Persistence has paid off with, for example, enabling a young person to manage his obsessive compulsive behaviour to make the transition from playroom to dining room without anxiety. Another has been helped to wait with increased patience by the visual prompt of an egg timer.
- Extra-ordinary creativity is also evident in providing stimulating experiences. This involves everyone in the home, with night staff taking as big a part as those working days. Imaginative displays and a thoroughly enjoyable Chinese New Year party for families are testament to that.
- Similarly cultural evenings involve dressing up, listening to music and colouring in flags, in addition to a traditional meal. Resources such as maps and photographs are created. Those not directly involved are included by observing activities and seeing the materials used and crafts produced.
- Staff very effectively promote the achievements of children and young people and encourage the full extent of their abilities, ensuring that short-breaks are not only enjoyable but life-enhancing. The involvement of young people in making choices for themselves or contributing to the running of the home, is personally affirming.

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

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a) and (b))	30 Sep 2015
The registered person must ensure records of measures of control or discipline are kept in accordance with requirements (Regulation 35 (3))	30 Sep 2015

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the children's guide includes details of how to contact the Office of the Children's Commissioner. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- prepare and implement policies setting out arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect that addresses the specific issues the home encounters, including communication strategies and the short periods of time children are resident. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 44, paragraph 9.19)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is a short-break unit which provides day care, and residential short breaks for up to five children and young people with learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

Other services operate from the same premises, including a Sleep Clinic and 'Out and About' facilitates children and young people with learning difficulties to access community resources. These are not regulated by Ofsted.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/11/2014	Full	Outstanding
10/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
12/11/2013	Full	Good

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>Children and young people coming to the home really enjoy their short breaks. Staff work hard to make sure they are not only safe and happy but also have enriching experiences, making personal progress wherever possible.</p> <p>Relationships built up between adults and children enable staff to understand behavioural cues that indicate that an individual is becoming unsettled, or wants something. Staff patiently work with them to find out how their needs may be met. Children and young people have a good experience of adults able to identify and meet those needs, so reducing frustration and enhancing confidence in care provided.</p> <p>Much thought and effort has gone into identifying the wishes and feelings of children and young people, from the interpretation of behaviour, through a post box for compliments and complaints, to a participation group that provides feedback directly to managers. This group has, among other activities, conducted a health and safety inspection that recommended particular actions that were then carried out, so validating and valuing their contribution.</p> <p>Some young people have further contributed by choosing décor in the home, such as fabric for blinds and colours of walls. This develops their feeling of being able to contribute and a sense of achievement when suggestions are followed.</p> <p>Staff have high aspirations for all children and young people in their care, and diligently support them to secure progress. 'Goal ladders' describe aims for children and young people and measure steps taken in achieving them. Parents and professionals give examples of progress made with independence (making hot drinks, stripping beds); openness to new things (trying new foods, watching different TV programmes); self-care skills (washing hair, 'hand over hand' feeding) and communication (recognising symbols, signing 'yes' or 'no').</p> <p>The experiences of children and young people are widened in a variety of ways, including opportunities for interaction with peers, nurturing relationships with staff and meeting people in the community, such as the local shopkeeper. Trips and special events are organised that sometimes include wider family members. The most creative of these include cultural evenings where children and young people get to experience something of other countries. These events allows children to experience and celebrate difference. The atmosphere in which something out of the ordinary is taking place gives the opportunity for children to do things they may not otherwise, such as participate in a new activity or try a new food.</p>	

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<p>Relationships forged between the manager, the staff and the children are key to the quality of help and protection afforded to children. They are of an exceptional standard.</p> <p>The attention to given to each child and young person is of a very high order. For example, during meals individual choices for having 'seconds', something different, or alternative menu options are recognised, often by non-verbal signals or observation of behaviour.</p> <p>Staff predominately use positive interventions to avoid or limit instances of challenging behaviour. Occasionally this may include physical interventions, which are recorded and reviewed appropriately. In rare instances sanctions are applied.</p> <p>Behavioural support plans are drawn up with the assistance of a behavioural specialist, where the challenges of young people warrant it. This has helped reduce incidents of physical interventions and achieve more settled sessions for all. An occupational therapist advises staff on how to move children safely, contributing to the high level of confidence parents have in the ability of staff to keep their children safe.</p> <p>The home's safeguarding policy attempts to provide staff with specific guidance to complement that issued by the local authority. However, it omits crucial advice such as the need to make a written record as soon as possible while not sufficiently addressing particular issues the setting faces; for example the wide ranging communication styles and children only being resident for one or two days at a time.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the value placed on safety and on safeguarding is evident. There is an eye-catching display for children about personal safety in the dining room and a very good example of staff raising child protection concerns. Informative and well-structured reports to conferences describe progress on the elements of the child protection plan staff were responsible for, as well as overall progress. The outcome was that care of the young person improved considerably.</p> <p>Doors to the outside are locked for security and safety, but internal ones remain open other than to protect children and young people from hazards or to maintain confidentiality. A young person was able to exit the home via a fire door after a key pad failed but staff vigilance ensured he was kept safe and repairs were effected within 24 hours to prevent a recurrence.</p> <p>Safer recruitment procedures are applied so that only those deemed as suitable are</p>	

employed to work in the home.

Health and safety policies and procedures are rigorously followed to comply with monitoring requirements, such as fire tests, drills and temperature checks and so provide children with a safe environment.

Assessments for new admissions do not specifically address any potential impact on other service users, but is discussed when the scheduling of breaks is considered. Staff conduct introductions to the home that alleviate anxieties of both children and parents.

Young people moving on to adult services have thorough transition plans. Exemplary practice includes facilitating visits from the new home, accompanying the young person on visits to it, staff going in to supporting during early stays, sharing risk assessments and other knowledge of the young person and going back again if necessary.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The young person's guide illustrates what the home looks like, and describes in simple terms what children and young people can expect when they stay. It includes information about making complaints but does not refer to the Office of the Children's Commissioner.</p> <p>The home's statement of purpose refers to diverting children and young people from unacceptable behaviour and a 'focus on positive reinforcement'. Management state that sanctions are not used, but case notes show their very occasional use by staff. There is no log to ensure the monitoring of the appropriateness or effectiveness of these measures.</p> <p>The manager has ensured that recommendations from previous inspections have been followed: a newly formatted monitoring report addresses the need for patterns and trends to be identified in order to improve the quality of care and records of checks made of agency staff are kept updated.</p> <p>A management update of policies and procedures in line with the 2015 children's homes regulations and guide is well underway, with those completed being shared with staff. Others, including a Workforce Development Plan, are being drawn up and demonstrate that the manager understands the requirements. A thorough</p>	



development plan is in place.

Other services also operate from the home and several children and young people access both short-breaks and one or more of these. This enables provision to be tailored to meet particular needs and for young people to have a venue where they meet their peer group for a range of activities.

Parents report excellent communication with the manager and staff so that they have a thorough account of each short stay and, in turn, provide staff with an in-depth understanding of the children and young people.

Having regular nights allocated for overnight stays provides predictability and no cancellations were reported. Parents have been consulted over provision in holidays and their preference of maintaining the routine of overnights rather than day care has been implemented.

Links between social work teams and the home are regarded as very strong by those teams. They describe 'massive opportunities to have informal and informal conversations'. There is good liaison with schools too; knowledge and strategies are shared.

Complaints or concerns about the service are extremely rare, but are dealt with thoroughly when made; praise is frequent. One young person shared a compliment she had posted during the inspection saying she enjoyed seeing a particular member of staff when she comes.

Supervision is regular and staff report that it is very helpful. They receive further support to help development or manage stress or if required. Staff training informs their work, as does the induction package described as 'the most thorough I've had' by one worker.

Bank and agency workers are used to ensure sufficient members of staff are available and the manager will work a shift too.

Staff have understood but not welcomed the changes in supervision arrangements and working patterns. Staff say they work in an incredibly supportive team and believe their manager provides strong leadership and backing.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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