

SC037986

Registered provider: Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a short-breaks home, which provides day care and residential short breaks for five children and young people who have learning disabilities. It is owned and managed by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The 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: 5 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Children who have disabilities are treated as children first. The staff have high aspirations for them and create opportunities for them to learn new skills.
- Achievements are celebrated.
- The staff actively support children to participate in all aspects of their lives. Consultation is a normal activity and staff work hard to demonstrate that they have listened to children.
- Behaviour management is excellent. A multi-disciplinary approach provides the staff with a range of tools to help guide their practice.
- Safeguarding is embedded into practice. Children are looked after by staff who understand their vulnerabilities and take appropriate action when necessary.
- Leaders and managers have created an environment that puts the child at the centre of everything they do.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The children's guide is not up to date and is not provided in an accessible format.
- On one occasion, a child was refused access to a telephone to contact his parents.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
24/11/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/08/2015	Full	Outstanding

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
Subject to paragraph (5) of regulation 22, the registered person must ensure that the children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home— a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private. (Regulation 22 (3)(a))	31/05/2018

Recommendations

- The children's home must produce a children's guide. The children's guide must be made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed (or on arrival at the home if the placement is made in an emergency) and must be age appropriate, provided in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit enormously from the variety of experiences they have on their short breaks. Visits are extremely child focused and are planned specifically to meet their individual and complex needs. Enthusiastic staff organise activities with and for them to enable them to learn new skills while having fun. As a result, the children look forward to coming here and they are supported to be as independent as possible. The group of children present during the inspection said that they 'loved' coming here and took great delight in telling the inspector all about their visit.

Parents are equally positive about the service. Those spoken with at the time of the inspection described the staff as being 'amazing' and providing a 'lifeline' to their families. The children benefit from continuity of care between settings. Skilled staff work closely with parents to ensure that transitions are smooth. They know the children extremely well and have built strong relationships with them. Because of this, the

children trust the staff and feel at home during their stay.

The quality of care and support is of a very high standard. Children's plans are comprehensive and contain realistic goals that are linked to their education and social care needs. The staff use the review process to set targets for the children to work on over a number of occasions, for example: 'I will read two pages of a book on six occasions'. Once completed, the staff celebrate the children's achievements by rewarding them with a star, certificate and a photo, which is proudly displayed on the 'wow' board. This practice makes the children feel very proud and valued by the staff.

Children's experiences and opportunities are linked to the quality standards, and evidence of these is captured in a variety of formats. For example, scrapbooks contain photos of the children engaging and participating in their chosen hobbies and interests. Files contain evidence of the children learning about and celebrating other cultures. Teenaged groups focus on learning independence skills.

The environment is very well equipped inside and out and has lots of space for the children to have fun. During their stays, the children are encouraged to build and sustain friendships with each other. Senior staff consider compatibility when organising their short breaks, including at the point of referral. Matching decisions are child focused and, therefore, only children whose needs can be met can access the service. However, once agreed, children will not be excluded, as the staff will work through issues to help prepare children for the future.

Information produced for the children, to help them understand the rules and boundaries, is clear. However, the children's guide is not up to date. The information contained in the document is not in an accessible format and some of the photos do not depict current decoration. This does not reflect the usual high standards and quality of information set out by the managers for the children.

There is an abundance of evidence of the children being listened to and being involved in the day-to-day living arrangements. Staff and managers go to great lengths to consult and engage the children in order to seek their views. Finding ways to communicate with them is seen as a priority and staff are trained to use a variety of methods. This is captured all around the walls, which are adorned with displays of what the children have said, the response from the staff and the outcome. Examples range from choosing a new sofa to what qualities they would like to see in the staff who work closely with them.

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

Children are extremely well looked after. Their parents have every confidence in the staff's ability to keep them safe and said that they trust the staff implicitly. Knowing the children well, the staff understand their vulnerabilities. The staff deal with concerns if and when they arise, and were described by one parent as being 'red hot' in relation to safeguarding. For example, they diligently follow up on any marks or bruising, and do so sensitively. As a result, parents are reassured that the staff take appropriate action when necessary and that their children's safety comes first.

Children are also helped to keep themselves safe. This includes working on a range of relevant topics with the staff to learn about issues such as stranger danger and bullying.

Children's risks are known and understood, they are well documented by the staff and there are clear strategies in place to minimise them. However, due to the complexities of the children's needs, unpredictable events can sometimes occur. For example, a recent incident notified to Ofsted resulted in a child leaving the premises in a distressed state. Acknowledging that this was unusual and not a known behaviour, the team was still keen to learn lessons from this to prevent a reoccurrence. This included working with the child to understand what had led up to the incident.

During the debrief, it transpired that the child had been refused the use of a telephone to call home. This decision was based on the staff not wanting to disturb his parents during their respite but did not follow the internal policy of allowing children free access to a telephone.

Competent staff know and understand the framework used for managing behaviour. They are trained in a specific intervention method; staff work hard to ensure that the children receive a consistent approach. The staff use advice and guidance from other professionals to develop individualised strategies. They also work hard at trying to find the reasons that underpin the behaviours, particularly when the children are unable to communicate verbally. This information is then used to help the children to understand their own behaviour and emotions and manage these.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

An inspirational and passionate registered manager manages the home. Supported by both a strong team and senior managers, she has created a service that is innovative and forward thinking. Her aspirations for children who have disabilities are based on a strong belief that they should be treated as children first. Because of this, practice is very child focused and continually evolving.

Significant developments this year have included: helping children to progress and reduce their dependency on adults; improved transitions to adult services; and creating the ethos of an enabling environment. Because of this, all of the children have benefited. One social worker spoken with explained how the staff had developed and led on a young person's transition to adult services, which probably would not have happened if they had not done so.

Rigorous management monitoring arrangements contribute to driving improvements. Plans identify and address strengths and areas for development and link seamlessly to other systems and processes. These documents bring everything together and capture what the registered manager does naturally as well as reflecting the quality of work undertaken.

The learning culture created by the registered manager enables the staff to develop.

Supervision and appraisals focus on their continual professional development. Meetings follow good practice guidance and provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice. The registered manager also has an excellent working knowledge of the regulations and has the ability to translate this into practice for the staff. As a result, the staff have the necessary skills to look after the children. This includes all staff holding the relevant qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037986

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell,
Berkshire RG12 1AQ

Responsible individual: Sonia Johnson

Registered manager: Samantha Whitehouse

Inspector(s)

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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