

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.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 28 June 2007.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 December 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 14 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2018	Full	Outstanding
05/12/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
24/11/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The new children's guides are excellent, particularly the digital version. The well-produced short video captures the atmosphere of the home very well. The video starts with a guided tour and helps to ensure that new children will know what to expect when they visit. The video also shows children having fun with the staff and their friends, playing with all of the toys, games and equipment. When consulted, children said that these are two of the things they like best about Larchwood.

When new children move in, they do so in a planned way. Managers and staff take time to gather information from a range of people to ensure that they can meet the individual and complex needs of the children. Working in partnership with parents, managers and staff ensure that plans are personalised and written to help provide continuity of care at home, at school and during short breaks.

The long-standing and stable staff team continues to provide nurturing care. Staff's ability to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the children results in children feeling valued. Using their skills and experience, staff give the children emotional support to help them while they are staying away from home. The staff quickly establish routines and boundaries, which give children stability and predictability.

Children are involved in a range of activities that really enhance their experience. Over the past year, they have met their social workers informally for breakfast at a restaurant, held and participated in fundraising events for charity and celebrated and remembered key events. These innovative ideas have taught the children new skills, given them opportunities to access their local community, learn about other cultures, promote healthy lifestyles, and all while having fun.

Preparation for adulthood begins formally when children reach the age of 15½ years of age. However, the staff actively promote independence from the moment a child begins to use the service. Children learn to maintain and/or develop self-help and social skills linked to clear targets, which are linked to other plans.

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

The registered manager has created a culture where children receive safe and effective care. Skilled staff understand the children's vulnerabilities and are extremely vigilant and recognise issues or concerns, which they respond to and report immediately. Senior managers ensure that their knowledge is up to date, using a variety of methods including learning from serious case reviews.

The approach to behaviour management is excellent. Access to specialist support means that staff are proactive when dealing with any new or challenging behaviours. When children are at risk of either hurting themselves or others, restraint is used as a last resort. The registered manager is quick to note any increase in incidents and to take

immediate action to reduce these.

Children are supported to access specialist help such as child and adolescent mental health services when appropriate. They are also helped to learn coping strategies to manage their anxiety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is inspirational. Her vision for the future puts children at the centre and is constantly evolving. She has developed a competent staff team that works on its own initiative. All staff have key areas of responsibility, which they undertake with real enthusiasm and commitment. This gives the manager the opportunity to continually look for new ways to develop the service.

New initiatives have had an immediate impact on both policy and practice. Group supervision is used effectively to think and reflect about a range of topics. This has given the long-standing staff team the opportunity to grow and develop and goes beyond the routine learning that takes place regularly.

The registered manager also welcomes external scrutiny and challenge to make improvements. Visits from the independent visitor help identify minor areas that need attention, which are always addressed immediately. Keen to seek further advice and guidance, the registered manager invited a peer to carry out an audit of the home. Again, the areas for improvement were minimal. However, some useful suggestions were made.

The internal monitoring arrangements are comprehensive. The responsible individual is an integral part of the system and, together with the registered manager, has very good oversight of the service. All management plans link together seamlessly and have clear actions, which include continually improving the home and facilities. This is fully supported by senior managers who invest in the service.

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: Louise Richer

Registered manager: Samantha Whitehouse

Inspector

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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