

2502334

Registered provider: Brighter Futures for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provision was re-registered under Brighter Futures for Children on 29 November 2018. The home can provide care for up to five children with a learning and/or physical and/or disability and/or sensory impairment.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2018.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspection of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 June 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/07/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff value the children as individuals and have built positive and trusting relationships with them.

The children have positive experiences moving into the home. The collaborative work between the allocated social worker, parents and education setting means that the children receive support and understanding from well-equipped and prepared staff who can meet their needs.

The staff support the children to enjoy safe arrangements when they spend time with their families. The staff work in partnership with parents and allocated social workers to ensure that this time is positive and in the interests of the child. This promotes home-life stability and helps the children to feel supported by a network of people. A social worker said, 'The home is an extension of the family.'

Key workers create beautiful life-journey books for the children. These books demonstrate the positive experiences the children have with staff, their peers and family. The captured moments place great emphasis on making memories and meaningful experiences for the children. One child celebrated 'Sister Day' and all children enjoyed creating Mother's Day cards and gifts.

The children benefit from highly personalised care that meets their specific needs. They benefit because of the commitment and hard work of the staff, who understand their needs and vulnerabilities and work diligently to ensure that these are catered for. One clinically vulnerable child has had a significant reduction in their hospital admissions since living in the home.

Key workers seek the children's views to enable contribution and participation during regular house meetings. The children are able to choose their preferred meal in the week, express how they are feeling about school and any activities they would like to do. The children clearly have a voice using this platform and it is listened to and respected by the staff and registered manager.

The children's key workers play a crucial role in ensuring that all necessary documentation is in place. This includes keeping the children's support plans up to date. Such plans are clearly laid out, easy to read and provide a clear oversight of each child's needs. Key workers play a central role in advocating for the children and are responsible for attending their regular reviews and meetings. This approach means that relevant professionals receive first-hand information from well-informed and practice-based staff.

The staff identify key targets in the children's education, health and care plans to promote a multi-agency approach and to set out goals for the children. These targets filter into daily planning to ensure the children have every opportunity to

work towards and achieve their goals. For example, staff have recently supported one child to use the toilet appropriately in the daytime. For children who are not in school, the staff use their initiative in matching suitable multi-agency targets for children to continue to achieve at home.

The staff use communication tools with children that are consistent with those used in their educational setting. This improves children's communication skills and helps them to reach their individual goals more quickly. Despite some good practice in this area, not all staff are proactive in using communication skills and/or aids from education in the home setting, particularly when children decline to use these.

The restrictions and changes in routines brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have had a major impact on one child living in the home. The staff have seen a significant rise in challenging incidents, resulting in more use of physical interventions to keep the child and others safe from harm. The spike in this child's behaviour is having an impact on the staff's ability and resources to provide the other children with regular outings. It is also having an impact on the children's environment. For example, children's toys and games are needing to be locked away. The registered manager is aware and has worked tirelessly with all professionals to gain some stability for the child. However, these efforts have been ineffective and therefore the manager has recently ended the child's placement.

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

The staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the children's vulnerabilities, risks and medical needs. Highly detailed care plans, combined with staff vigilance and awareness, ensure that the children are kept safe. Carefully assessed staffing levels ensure that the children receive appropriate support and supervision in their home.

The staff manage the children's complex emotional and behavioural needs well and demonstrate a commitment to overcoming difficult and challenging behaviours. The staff work closely and transparently with parents and professionals to gain insight into the children's needs. Joined-up behavioural management plans from educational settings provide children with a consistent approach and familiar touch.

The registered manager ensures that staff are safely recruited and have the skills to care for the children. She ensures that all relevant checks are completed on staff prior to starting at the home. Diligent processes reduce the risks of unsuitable adults being recruited.

The home's premises are appropriately secure, providing a safe environment for the children. The registered manager has secured funds to start the necessary work to the outside of the home and the children's garden. She is in the process of contacting local landscape gardeners to find out what can be created in the space available. Staff are keen for the children to have more playground equipment and sensory exploration items. This is all forming part of the registered manager's development plan for the outside space. The registered manager is also ordering a

wheelchair-accessible vehicle for the home so that all children can travel together.

Staff are attuned to the severity of the potential risks that may be apparent for children with complex needs and disabilities. Consequently, there is emphasis on providing a safe physical environment. The staff carry out regular fire alarm testing and fire safety checks. Every child has a personal emergency evacuation plan so that the staff know how to support them in the event of a fire. The staff support the children to participate in regular day and night fire drills. This helps the children to become familiar with the procedures should an emergency occur.

Staff continue to operate the home in a way that provides protection for the children, staff and visitors in response to the continuing risks of the pandemic.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers regularly review children's plans and targets and have effective systems in place to keep track of the children's progress in meeting these. Good joint working with partner agencies is evident throughout the children's plans and targets. The managers challenge the professional network effectively when they feel that more is needed to meet children's identified needs.

The registered manager's monitoring systems are excellent and demonstrate that she has clear managerial oversight of the home. She is reflective, focused and highly driven to deliver a person-centred approach to care. The staff say that the registered manager is proactive and listens to the children and the staff. However, some staff felt their efforts throughout the pandemic were underappreciated by senior managers. The registered manager is aware and has shared this feedback with the responsible individual.

The registered manager and responsible individual have a shared vision for the home. They are focused on providing a secure and stable base for the children, to enable them to progress and achieve. They work in close partnership with a range of professionals and specialist services to safeguard the children and to meet their holistic, emotional and healthcare needs. This approach demonstrates the leaders' and managers' dedication to wanting the absolute best care and outcomes for the children.

There are detailed risk assessments in place for the children and these are reviewed every six months, or after a significant event. However, restrictive practices such as the locking of children's wardrobes and cupboards has not fallen into the cycle of this good practice. Although the locking of such furnishings was the initial process to safeguard the children, the registered manager has not revisited this. This means that the children have not been given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have made progress in some of their historical risk-taking behaviours.

The recording tools in respect of physical interventions are cumbersome and lengthy. Multiple tools and systems result in unnecessary repetition, which adds to the time needed by staff to complete these. Although detailed questions are asked,

not all elements of the relevant regulation are being captured. There are also occasions when managers have signed off physical intervention records without demonstrating that they have sufficiently scrutinised the content. There is a risk that complicated administrative systems reduce the ability of managers to monitor effectively and be assured of the relevance and necessity of these measures and the safety of the children when they are used.

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
<p>The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>develop positive relationships with them;</p> <p>engage with them; and</p> <p>take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children’s care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered manager is to ensure that staff use children’s communication aids, methods and devices at all times and in accordance with children’s relevant plans.</p>	25 August 2021
<p>The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>develop the child’s interests and hobbies;</p> <p>participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child’s interests and preferences; and</p> <p>make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and</p> <p>that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child’s interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))</p>	25 August 2021

<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p> <p>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	<p>1 December 2021</p>
--	------------------------

Recommendation

- The provider should ensure that, just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 2502334

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighter Futures for Children

Registered provider address: Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 2LU

Responsible individual: Claire Lewis

Registered manager: Helena Macieira Baptista

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021