

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC030677
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	West Berkshire Council
Registered person address	West Berkshire District Council, Council Office, Market Street, NEWBURY, Berkshire, RG14 5LD

Responsible individual	Juliet Penley
Registered manager	Sara King
Inspector	Trish Palmer

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. The young people continue to make good progress during their stay in the home. The home works closely with schools and parents regarding targets for young people. A member of staff commented, 'because the young people generally only use the service twice a month it's important that we work to the same targets as parents and school so that we don't confuse the young people.' New paper work has been implemented to incorporate work and progress young people have made during their stay. This ensures parents are kept updated by staff on the progress of their child. The manager is forward thinking and has clear aspirations for the young people and staff and is proactive into looking at how the home can be improved. The home has recently piloted a group for young people who are near the transition stage into adulthood. Skills for Adulthood and Independent Living, (SAIL) is a three-month programme developed to address a gap in provision in preparing young people with disabilities for adulthood through promoting and teaching independent living skills. This has been very successful with young people learning some valuable skills including work experience. Parents and school have feedback that the young people have become a lot more confident and prepared for transitions. Transitions into the home are also managed well. Senior managers meet with parents to gain information about the young person, they will also visit the young person's school to observe and speak to teachers about behaviours and targets. Parents are asked to complete a care plan regarding their child's needs. Parents and siblings accompany young people on several tea visits and once all the paper work is completed young people can begin their overnight stays. One parent commented, 'for me it seemed a long process but for X it was the perfect amount of time and worked well for him.' There was one recommendation from the last inspection. This was for the manager	

to seek and develop working relationships with the local police officer. This has been very successful and he has begun to visit the home. There are photos of young people trying on his uniform. He is also due to come to a young people's meeting to talk to them about keeping themselves safe. The local fire brigade are also coming to talk to young people about fire safety.

Young people have built positive relationships with an experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated staff team who know and understand the individual needs of the young people. Staff were very welcoming to young people coming into the home, one young person was asked if they were pleased to be here, he smiled and put a thumb up. His mother commented, 'X loves it here, he knows when he's coming and gets really excited, the staff know him well so I know he's well looked after which means I can enjoy some respite knowing he's happy and well cared for.'

Staff see the young people as central to the home, they are consulted in a wide variety of ways including monthly feedback forms and young people's meetings. These are communicated in both WIDGET and PECS (which are picture-form communications systems) giving all young people the opportunity to be involved.

There are PECS around the home giving young people information about how to complain and what to do if they feel they are being bullied, as well as information about the home and activities planned for that day.

The young people have begun to complete All About Me books. These contain information about them that they want people to know, photos of activities in the home and out in the community are added to these to form memories that they can take with them when they leave.

Staff understand the importance of safeguarding the young people. All staff have completed safeguarding training. The home has appropriate security on doors and windows and all health and safety checks are up to date. There are comprehensive risk assessments on file signed by parents and a detailed care plan which support staff when working with the young people.

Staff report that supervisions are regular and supportive, staff meetings are monthly and incorporate young people and care practice.

During handover staff are allocated to work with young people, a member of staff is responsible for medication and another two are fire wardens for the shift. Staff complete risk assessments before each outdoor activity.

Young people in the transition group have completed sessions around appropriate relationships, internet safety and sexual health to support them in being able to keep themselves safe.

There has been one physical intervention since the last inspection. This was needed to keep the young person safe. Staff recorded the incident but the young

person's views were not sought or recorded. Young people need to be spoken to after a physical intervention and their views recorded to monitor the effectiveness and to ascertain if they felt unsafe during the hold or understood the reasons it happened.

There have been two sanctions but again there has been no comment recorded by the young people. This means the opportunity for young people to learn from the incident and feedback their opinion of whether it was fair may be missed.

Staff have built good relationships with parents. A parent commented, 'X has been doing fabulously since coming here, staff understand his needs and I get a report after every visit which is really important as X is non-verbal.' Five parents now attend a steering group held quarterly, the manager will inform the group of the development plan and plans for the home, parents have the opportunity to discuss changes that they would like. Quarterly feedback forms are also sent to parents enabling them to have their say about the home.

Staff understand the importance of working with education providers especially around targets and goals. Staff work closely with schools and will visit young people and speak to teachers. They will also attend reviews.

There have been three complaints since the last inspection, these have been responded to appropriately and the outcome recorded.

The home is well equipped with toys and games, there are photos of staff and young people participating in activities as well as paintings that young people have created.

The young people are supported in choosing bedding, rugs and toys that they want in their room during their stay. This personalises their rooms and gives them a sense of familiarity. There is large well-maintained and equipped garden for young people to enjoy.

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for children and young people who have a learning and/or physical disability and is registered to accommodate up to six children and young people. Other services offered include day care, after school care and support groups.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/10/2015	CH - Full	Good
17/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
18/11/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
04/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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

Recommendations

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

- Children who cannot or choose not to verbalise, have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and respected in the same way as other children. This is in relation to children's views being recorded after physical interventions and sanctions. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations Page 24 Paragraph 4.24.)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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