

SC030677

Registered provider: West Berkshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It provides short breaks for children who have physical and/or learning disabilities. The home is registered to provide care for up to six children.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2020.

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

We last visited this home on 1 December 2020, to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 May 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: 24 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A compliance notice was issued in relation to regulation 45, with the completion date 29 November 2020. This notice was judged to be met at the monitoring visit on 1 December 2020.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2020	Interim	Not judged
19/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/12/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/02/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make progress against agreed targets while accessing short breaks. Staff work closely with parents and schools to ensure a consistent approach to caring for children. Staff have recently begun taking photographs of children engaged in activities, which highlights their development and enjoyment.

Children's views are central to their care planning. Staff seek their views and ideas through questionnaires, meetings and general discussion. Children make as many daily choices as possible, such as choosing activities and what they would like to eat. Their views have had an impact on how the building has been decorated. Staff spend time seeking the views of children who do not communicate verbally, by watching what they like and using their individual communication styles, such as eye gazing.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some services have been restricted during national and regional lockdowns. Day sessions were offered to children whenever possible, and social workers commended the staff on continuing to provide a service in challenging times. Children have returned to overnight stays as lockdown restrictions have eased. Children currently visit in school 'bubbles'. The staff are listening to children's and parent's views and there will be a return to friendship groups as soon as national guidance allows. The service is well resourced, and children have a wealth of activities provided in the home and grounds.

Children's health and well-being are supported during their breaks. Staff work collaboratively with health professionals. This ensures that healthcare plans are clear and appropriate, and emergency responses are followed when needed.

Staff have received training in relation to children's specific healthcare needs. However, this is not always signed off by health professionals and there is no mechanism in place to ensure that the training is regularly updated.

The management team has requested more input from the occupational therapist and speech and language teams, to help staff support some children more effectively. This is yet to be progressed, and needs escalating. A zipped sleeping system that is proposed to be used for one child, but it has not been formally agreed by a health professional, despite it being a mechanical restraint.

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

Children say they feel safe and relaxed while accessing short breaks. Their actions and demeanour show that they are confident about approaching staff and are comfortable in their surroundings.

Staff know how to respond should they be concerned for a child's safety or welfare. They understand the external risks for children, but also the acute/serious risks that can be associated with having multiple carers. All children have specific arrangements in place for their intimate and personal care, to ensure consistency in approach and agreements on what is acceptable for each child. Plans are clear on what support the children need, and what they are able to achieve independently.

Staff recognise that children communicate through their behaviour, and meet their needs accordingly. Behaviour support plans, care plans and risk assessments reflect how best to meet the children's needs. Staff reduce the need to physically intervene by identifying when a child is becoming unsettled and their behaviour is escalating. Physical intervention is rarely used, and there has been only one sanction implemented in the last year. Following this, staff amended the support plan to reduce the likelihood of the child having sanctions in the future.

Children are protected from avoidable risk through regular health and safety reviews of the environment. Work to remedy any issues, including those noted on the fire risk assessment, is completed swiftly.

The home has been completely refurbished and redecorated, providing a bright, safe and homely environment in which children can have fun.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff say they are very well supported by their managers. They report that they are given clear direction and that children's experiences have significantly improved. Staff supervision is challenging and reflective. Observations by managers provide staff with useful learning in terms of what they do well and where they need to improve. Staff morale in the home is good.

Monitoring systems are effective. In order to improve them, managers have overhauled and redesigned the record-keeping system. They have implemented six-monthly reviews so that parents and the wider professional network can see the progress children are making. Partnership working is strong.

The management team is committed to the ongoing development and improvement of the home. The members of the management team are aspirational for the home, and their development plan appropriately includes input from staff and children. Good progress has been made in bringing about improvements to date, which has improved children's circumstances.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (b)) Specifically, ensure that any measures to promote children's health and well-being, which may be deemed a restriction of liberty, are agreed with an appropriate health professional.	30 June 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)) Specifically, ensure that training in delegated healthcare tasks is regularly reviewed and signed off by a relevant healthcare professional.	30 June 2021

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: SC030677

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Castle Gate, Love Lane, Donnington, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2JG

Responsible individual: Jane Seymour

Registered manager: Michael Garrity

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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