

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 or learning disabilities. The home is registered to provide care for up to six children.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2020. At the time of inspection, the manager was away from the home for an extended period.

Inspection date: 30 March 2023

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: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
24/02/2020	Interim	Not judged
19/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/12/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have enjoyable short breaks, supported by an enthusiastic and committed staff team. They are helped to have new experiences as well as spend time with others their own age in a social setting. Staff support children to try new activities and, as a social worker said, 'The staff see the children before they see their disability.'

Children make progress through staying at the service. Staff have excellent links with the children's schools, sharing plans to ensure consistency in approach to meeting children's goals and targets. Plans are clear on what children are working towards, with records showing their progress towards these each stay. Children learn new skills such as gaining greater independence in eating, or learning to share space and be with other people. Close links with parents mean that there is consistency across the settings and children's new skills are not lost. Parents are highly complimentary of the staff and service for children. They say that their children enjoy their stays and are upset when it is not their turn to stay!

Staff use questionnaires to gain children's wishes, to see if they have enjoyed their stay, what activities they have enjoyed and if they feel safe. This information is collated and acted on when needed. Children's feedback forms are completed individually with children with staff help where needed. Children make choices throughout their stay as staff are skilled in each child's communication tools and style.

Children enjoy a range of activities in the community. There are regular trips to the local shops or parks after school, but also time for relaxing after a long day at school.

Children have individualised, child-centred health plans which are updated when there is a change. Close links with the specialist nurse mean that the staff understand every aspect of each child's health needs. Medication is administered and stored correctly, and all staff have completed medication training. Staff have a good understanding of children's current medical needs and protocols.

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

Children's actions and demeanour show that they feel relaxed and comfortable during their stays. Staff know each child's risks and vulnerabilities and work well to keep children safe. Staff know the procedure to follow should they be concerned for a child's safety or welfare. Should concerns arise, staff work effectively with partner agencies, exploring all aspects of the issue, developing practice as required.

Staff know that children are communicating how they are feeling through their behaviour. They rarely use physical interventions and never use consequences. Staff

support children to develop their resilience and tolerance through making the environment predictable and safe for children. They make meticulous plans to take children on new activities to ensure that they are as safe as possible.

Staff monitor children's actions and presentation on arrival at the service. They complete body maps if children arrive with any marks or bruises. While staff report these injuries to parents and/or school, children's social workers have not been informed. Although no children have been put at risk, this practice means that there is less oversight of the patterns, if any, of children's injuries.

The home is well maintained and fully equipped to meet the physical needs of all children. There are many areas for play, including two soft areas and an adventure playground. Children's rooms are individualised with themes for differing interests. Children choose their bedding for their stay, and their photo on the bedroom door makes it truly their 'space'.

There are some gaps in the written records of recruitment and pre-employment information. These include not having full employment histories, including months and years of employment. In addition, a disclosure and barring service certificate number was not available for one member of staff. In the absence of the registered manager, this information was hard to locate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's registered manager and deputy were both unavailable during the inspection. The responsible individual has a basic working knowledge of the home and supported the inspection.

Staff say that they feel supported by the management team, and particularly found the new team leaders to be really helpful and supportive. Staff feel that they can approach the team leader and deputy at any time.

The staff have regular, effective supervision, which they said supports them in working with the children and develops their skills and understanding. They have access to all the training that they need to support children and keep them safe, in addition to specific training in health needs from the community nurse.

Joint working with partner agencies is a strength. The social work team manager was complimentary about staff for attending statutory meetings. Staff are seen by other professionals as really good advocates for children, capturing aspects of the children's life that other professionals have not.

Managers have strong oversight of the service provided. The development plan is aspirational. Progress towards meeting the areas identified has been good. However, there are gaps in oversight which have led to plans not being explicitly clear. For example, some plans are colour coded. However, there is no key to explain these. Additionally, some language is not appropriate or does not provide enough clarity.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)) In particular, ensure that bruising and marks recorded on body maps are reported to the child's social worker.	31 May 2023
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, ensure that children's plans are clear and easy to understand; for example, where colour coding is used, provide a key to the meaning.	31 May 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only—	31 May 2023

employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, evidence that all suitable pre-employment checks have taken place.	
---	--

Recommendation

- The responsible person should ensure that records are objective and non-stigmatising. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: West Berkshire Council

Registered provider address: Victoria Park Children's Centre, Newbury RG14 1EH

Responsible individual: Jane Seymour

Registered manager: Michael Garrity

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Trish Palmer, 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 looked after children, 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 2023