

SC031479

Registered provider: London Borough of Southwark

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a local authority service. It provides short breaks for up to five children who have complex learning and/or physical disabilities and/or challenging behaviours. Children usually stay from Monday to Friday or at weekends. The children's respite service shares the premises with a similar service for adults. There is one registered manager for both the children's and adults' services. All staff work across both provisions. The Care Quality Commission regulates and inspects the adult service. The home reopened on 15 January 2018 after being non-operational for over 14 months.

Inspection date: 19 February 2018

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: 12 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: not judged

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Leadership and management of the home are stable, strong and ambitious.
- The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a competent registered manager.
- Changes are managed well. The home has made an excellent start after a long break in the service during a period when the home environment was refurbished.
- The staff team is stable. This results in the continuity of care for children and young people.
- Staff are caring, skilled and qualified.
- Staff are effective in keeping children and young people safe from harm and promoting their welfare.
- The risk management practices are proactive and robust.
- Children and young people receive good-quality care that meets their needs.
- The behaviour management practices in the home are effective. Children and young people's behaviours have become significantly less challenging than they used to be.
- Children and young people have positive experiences.
- The premises are of the highest standard. The outstanding quality of the physical environment adds to the positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people.
- Children and young people have good opportunities to learn, gain skills and become more independent.
- Children and young people have made good progress across different aspects of their lives.
- Leaders, managers and staff work in close partnerships with children's and young people's parents and other professionals.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/09/2017	Interim	Not judged
22/02/2017	Interim	Not judged
01/11/2016	Interim	Not judged
19/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people enjoy their short breaks. They have enriching experiences. They build positive relationships with staff members. They make connections with their peers. They have good opportunities to learn and gain skills. Children and young people engage in a range of activities that support their personal development and promote their independence.

Children and young people receive good-quality care from staff members who they trust. Children and young people who were on short breaks at the time of this inspection were non-verbal. They appeared to be very relaxed in the presence of staff. They continually looked at staff members as if seeking their explanations about what was happening and approval and responded very well to staff guidance. Children and young people have their needs met. The home has comprehensive care plans for each child and young person. These plans describe how to meet children's and young people's individual health, emotional, social, psychological, behavioural, communication and learning needs. In partnership with parents, staff ensure that these plans are reviewed on a regular basis and remain up to date. Staff also work closely with other professionals to make sure that children and young people receive consistent and all-round support in all areas of their lives.

The team's current improvement focus is on developing a more structured and evidence-based approach to promoting children's and young people's positive outcomes. As part of this development, they have introduced clearer and smarter individual learning targets. Recently, as part of the admission process, staff agreed with the mother to help her son achieve three specific targets. Those targets related to using cutlery, wearing pyjamas in bed and sleeping throughout the night for all four nights during a short break. The young person achieved all his targets during his first short break in this home. The young person's swift progress demonstrates the staff's excellent skills in forming positive relationships with children and young people and making a positive difference in their lives.

Staff have a good understanding of children and young people with a wide range and different levels of disabilities, including communication difficulties. Staff are caring and skilled communicators. This shows in how attentively they observe children and young people and look for any signs of comfort or rising anxiety. Staff help children and young people to understand what is happening around them by continually describing what is going on. They help children and young people to communicate their feelings, wishes and views in constructive ways rather than through challenging behaviours. They provide verbal interpretations of children's and young people's non-verbal expressions and offer constructive solutions. For example, when staff notice that children and young people are becoming anxious, they remind them that they can take deep breaths to achieve a calmer state of mind.

Staff involve children and young people in making choices as much as possible. Each

short break starts with staff explaining to children and young people about various options that are available to them and letting them choose what happens. Providing different safe options and letting children and young people choose is integral to how staff relate to children and young people. Staff treat children and young people with dignity and respect. Staff and a parent commented positively on how this approach promoted children's and young people's confidence, self-esteem and feelings of belonging.

The outstanding quality of the physical environment adds to the positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people. The whole home has been recently refurbished to the highest standard. The premises are spacious and furnished beautifully. There are two sensory rooms with an extensive range of interactive equipment for children and young people to use. The specialist equipment and adaptations do not detract from the environment being homely.

Both young people who were using the service at the time of the inspection moved through the home with confidence. For one young person in particular, this is a sign of great progress. He has a visual impairment and mobility issues. The young people communicated clearly their positive feelings about being in the home environment and seeing the staff members. One mother said: 'My son has been coming here for about 11 years. He absolutely loves it. He is very, very happy here. He is loved. He is adored.' She described the registered manager and the staff as their extended family. She said that they were good advocates for her son and her whole family. She concluded that the service was absolutely amazing.

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

This is a safe service. Staff are effective in keeping children and young people safe from harm and promoting their welfare.

Staff have received appropriate training on a number of safeguarding topics. They have access to clear procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns. As a result, staff have a solid understanding of safeguarding. They are vigilant and effective in their safeguarding roles.

Staff's risk management practices are robust. Staff are aware of children's and young people's vulnerabilities that pose risks to their welfare. They take proactive actions to minimise any risks to children and young people. For example, by removing or minimising the known triggers for children's and young people's challenging behaviours, such as excessive or sudden noise, being hungry or a change in the environment. High staffing levels, careful planning of the breaks and activities and good staff practices have resulted in increased safety for children and young people. Since the home reopened, there have been no safeguarding incidents. No child or young person has gone missing from the home.

The effectiveness of the behaviour management practices in the home is a real strength of the service. The home has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Children and young people

engage positively and respond well to any instructions given by staff. There has been no need for staff to use any physical interventions or sanctions, since the home reopened. Staff use praise to reinforce children's and young people's constructive behaviours. For example, by saying well done to a young person for sitting at the table while eating a snack or another young person who was able to signal his need for having some private time.

Each child and young person has a clear and up-to-date written behaviour management plan. Staff follow these plans consistently. The young people who, in the past, required constant support from three staff members due to their challenging behaviours, are now supported safely by one staff member for most of the time. This was the case for both young people who were using the service at the time of the inspection. They have achieved significant progress in being able to self-regulate their behaviours and emotions. For example, they recognise the home's sensory room and their bedrooms as their places of safety. The inspector observed one young person taking himself to his safe space, at the beginning of his visit to the home. This was to allay the anxieties provoked by the transition into a different environment.

Health and safety checks ensure that the physical environment is safe for children and young people, staff and visitors to the service. Any risks arising from the premises being used at the same time by children and young people and adults with complex needs and challenging behaviours have been eliminated by a clear separation of those two services.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are ambitious about the quality of the service that they provide. They ensure that the service is resourced appropriately in line with the home's statement of purpose. Through close monitoring of the experiences and outcomes for children and young people, leaders and managers ensure that the decisions they make remain firmly child-centred.

The home has a competent registered manager. He is appropriately qualified and experienced. The registered manager has been successfully managing this service for four years. Staff talk highly about his leadership. He has inspired them to seek continued improvement for the benefit of children and young people.

Children and young people receive a service that is managed effectively and efficiently. Three committed and able deputy managers support the registered manager in his role.

The registered manager has skilfully led the service through a period of significant change. This home was not providing a service from 1 November 2016 to 14 January 2018. The break in the service provision was due to a major refurbishment and reconfiguration of the premises. During that period, the same respite service continued to operate at a different location. This was a separate registration with Ofsted, and was subject to regular inspection. Children and young people continued to receive a good-quality service from the same staff during this period. This approach minimised the negative impact of these changes on the children's and young people's positive

experiences and progress.

The management team and the staff team are stable. There have been no changes to staffing since November 2014. Consequently, children and young people experience continuity of care and relationships.

All staff have appropriate qualifications. Regular training and support enable them to continue to build on their professional knowledge and skills. Regular reviews of their practices at team meetings and individual supervision meetings contribute to their continued learning and professional development.

The registered manager engages in constructive dialogues with other professionals and parents, in the best interest of children and young people. One parent told the inspector that the registered manager's support and advice was invaluable to her. She said that she had full confidence that he and other staff always wanted only the best for her son.

The home has made an excellent start after a long break in the provision of the service. Leaders, managers and staff are highly motivated to continue to improve and develop the service further. Good internal and external monitoring enable them to be aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers address any emerging weaknesses and identified areas for further development. In addition to the much improved physical environment, the other improvement efforts focused on enabling better participation of children and young people in making choices and developing the evidence-based practices further.

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: SC031479

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: London Borough of Southwark

Registered provider address: London Borough of Southwark, Play Service,
285 Albany Road, London SE5 0AH

Responsible individual: Fiona Wasdell

Registered manager: Michael Garrity

Inspector

Seka Graovac: social care inspector

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