

SC032315

Registered provider: Brighton & Hove City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority runs this short-break children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 January 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Staff show a real passion and commitment to enhancing the opportunities and activities that are available to the children staying for short breaks.
- Children make remarkable progress in their ability to communicate their wishes and feelings, and are routinely involved in making choices about their day-to-day lives.
- A long-standing staff team provides stability and continuity for the children in its care. Staff are extremely competent and are trained well to work with children who have complex needs.
- The staff work effectively in partnership with the wider network to achieve the best outcomes for the children.
- The manager has created an environment where the children are extremely well cared for and the staff are supported to develop.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/03/2017	Full	Outstanding
10/05/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/12/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/05/2015	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The quality of individualised care and support for children who have differing and complex needs is exceptional. The long-standing staff team provides children with continuity of care while they are away from their homes. The warm and welcoming atmosphere when children arrive into the setting helps them to settle quickly into familiar routines. Careful planning by the staff on a daily basis ensures that children's medical and social needs are met. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection say that they 'trust the staff' and 'have every confidence' in their ability to look after their child in their absence. As a result, the children feel comfortable in their surroundings and their families can relax in the knowledge that they are being well cared for.

Children benefit enormously from their short breaks because they have fun and have the opportunity to explore different activities. The well-equipped house and garden provide a safe environment for the children to be as independent as possible. The staff actively support this by helping the children to choose what they would like to do. Children are actively involved in other aspects of their care. For example, they are given a choice about which member of staff they would like to support them each day and what game they would like to play. This practice enables the children to develop their personal, social and communication skills.

Highly effective working relationships with education staff enhance the children's experiences further because everyone is helping them to achieve the same outcomes. Termly visits to the school and regular communication with teachers enable the staff to learn how to adapt targets to use at the home; these include learning skills such as eating, drinking and language. One teacher told inspectors that this approach had 'enabled one child to make exceptional progress with their communication'. Consequently, the child is now able to make their wishes and feelings known.

The staff have high ambitions for the children and work extremely hard to enhance their life chances and opportunities. Treated as children first, they are supported to overcome barriers and are given opportunities to do things their parents say they would not be able to do at home. These include simply 'making and spending time with friends' as well as doing 'amazing things such as surf-boarding and archery'. The passion and commitment of the staff is evident and, as a result, the children benefit from strong relationships with them.

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

The safeguarding of children is embedded into practice. The staff are very aware of the vulnerability of the children and, as a result, they remain vigilant at all times. This vigilance includes routinely recording any marks and/or bruising observed on the children, and following up on how and when they may have occurred. A social worker spoken to during the inspection said that 'staff always report concerns', and that they are very supportive when families need extra help. This practice helps to keep the

children safe.

The overall safety of the children is extremely well managed. High staff ratios mean that all children receive the level of attention and support that they need. This support includes managing children's complex health and medical needs. The administration of medication alone can often take up a considerable amount of the daily routine, and the task requires a lot of concentration. On the rare occasion that an error is made, the focus of the staff is to ensure that the child has not come to any harm. All of these incidents are fully investigated by the manager in an open and transparent way. Her proportionate response enables the staff to learn from their mistakes and identifies ways to prevent errors being repeated.

Well-trained staff are adept at managing behaviour. Individual plans incorporate generic policies and provide clear guidance for the staff to follow. In addition, the recent use of social stories has helped to reduce the children's anxiety when they are faced with unexpected changes. For example, they are helped to prepare for when the staff are absent from the home. Consequently, the staff understand individual triggers and are able to de-escalate potentially challenging situations. All incidents are monitored by the manager to ensure that the most appropriate intervention has taken place, and that it is consistent with the care plan.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A suitably qualified manager leads the home. Her strong leadership style has created an environment where the staff spoken to during the inspection said that they feel well supported to learn and develop. The majority of the staff have worked at the home for many years and, as a result, the children benefit from a well-trained, experienced staff team that provides stability and continuity of care on a daily basis. Acting as a role model, the manager leads by example and works closely with the staff team to maintain the high standards that are in place. Her knowledge of the children is exceptional, and she is well respected by her team.

The manager continually looks for ways to develop the service and is very open to feedback. This includes listening and responding to low-level complaints and using them as an opportunity to learn. Any expression of dissatisfaction from either a child or a parent is investigated and resolved in a timely way. Questionnaires are also used to obtain the views of children and their families; those sampled at the time of the inspection show that the children are very positive about the service and are happy to be there. This consultative practice enables parents and children to feel that they will be listened to and that they can say if they are unhappy with any aspect of the service.

The management monitoring arrangements are very effective. All of the systems, including feedback, form part of the overall review of the home. Current guidance and legislation are used as a benchmark to assess quality and standards. Clear action plans address areas for development and complement the workforce development plan. As a result, the manager has excellent oversight and knows what is working well and what needs to be improved.

Supervision arrangements focus on the continual professional development of staff. Meetings take place regularly and are consistent with good practice. Records viewed during the inspection show that the staff are given the opportunity to reflect on their practice. The identified training needs of staff are addressed through a comprehensive training programme; this ensures that the staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the children in their care.

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: SC032315

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighton & Hove City Council

Registered provider address: Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 3BQ

Responsible individual: Naomi Cox

Registered manager: Clare Brunt

Inspector

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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