

SC033919

Registered provider: London Borough of Harrow

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to five young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home will care for young people with learning, sensory and/or physical disabilities.

The registered manager has been registered since July 2007.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 26 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2017	Full	Outstanding
30/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating– the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must– supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and the system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1), (2)(a)(b)(c), (3), (4)(a), (5))	31/03/2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make exceptional progress. Notable achievements are evident in every aspect of young people's lives. Examples are numerous and include improved sleeping patterns and healthier diets, improved communication skills, learning to share, improved independence skills and learning to ride a bike. Staff always celebrate young people's achievements, rewarding 'star of the week' and 'star of the month' certificates to young people.

The dynamic staff team takes time to plan meticulously for every young person's short break. Staff's comprehensive knowledge helps to prioritise the needs of young people, including meeting their unique dietary requirements, bedroom choices, favourite activities, non-verbal communication styles and sensory needs. A child psychologist described the service as 'an amazing resource, where children's needs are at the centre of their thinking'.

Weekly young people's meetings, combined with ongoing consultations between staff and young people, ensure that young people have a significant voice in the home. They choose the home's annual fundraising charity, the paint colour for the garden playhouse and the tiles for the newly upgraded bespoke disabled bathroom facility.

The highly resourceful staff team makes excellent use of modern technology and other creative ideas to support young people during their time in the home. To assist a young person to sleep better, staff ensure that the young person is provided with their chosen nighttime music to play. The young person's favourite song is recorded on a tablet for them to listen to. Furthermore, the home purchases particular coloured blankets to ensure that another young person is comfortable in bed.

Staff continue to embrace learning and implement new ideas. Since the last inspection, sensory storytelling and intensive interaction play sessions have helped to enhance the staff's skills to meet young people's individual needs. Play can be purposeful, such as a walk in the park to enable a young person to scrunch leaves to meet a sensory need, while intensive interaction play means that staff will wear their swimwear and join in with a young person in the outdoor paddling pool.

The wide range of activities on offer enable young people to have enormous fun, both inside and outside the home. The very popular annual summer party is well attended by young people, parents and professionals alike, alongside trips to safari parks, zoos, parks and restaurants for meals.

Diversity is celebrated, and cultural celebrations in the home for Diwali, Hanukah and saints' days are enhanced by opportunities for sensory play, arts and crafts and baking, and this adds to their overall enjoyment.

A headteacher said, 'Young people get an excellent standard of care, enjoy their stay

and are learning important life skills during their short breaks.’ A member of staff described the home as a ‘family home’, and a young person signed that ‘Staying here is such fun.’

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

The knowledgeable staff team understands each young person’s complex needs very well. Highly detailed risk assessments, behaviour management plans and positive behaviour support plans help young people to take safe, managed risks under close supervision during their short breaks.

Staff routinely consider new strategies or techniques to support young people. Examples include facilitating a change of transport arrangements to help to minimise a young person’s travelling distress and staff initiating social stories between home and school to help young people to understand the arrangements for their planned stay at the home.

Leaders’, managers’ and staff’s multidisciplinary working is exemplary. Staff attend every young person’s professional reviews and termly school meetings, and contribute very detailed written and visual reports. A headteacher commended staff for ‘The effectiveness of individual planning for pupils to ensure that their move to staying at the home is seamless and creates minimum distress to a young person.’

Work undertaken with parents is highly effective. Comprehensive advice, ideas and guidance are shared with parents. On more than one occasion, this has enabled a young person to remain living at home with their family.

The home provides a safe physical environment. Young people do not go missing from the home. Since the last inspection there have been no episodes of physical restraint, and when there have been any incidents of challenging behaviour, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are updated without delay and shared at team meetings. This helps to ensure that staff provide young people with care and support that are dynamic and meet young people’s changing needs.

All staff are subject to robust recruitment procedures. All staff are suitably qualified and trained, and safeguarding practices help to protect young people and promote their welfare. The manager ensures that all statutory certificates for fire checks and health and safety checks are both current and in line with regulations. A parent said, ‘My child is 100% safe when they stay at the home.’

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The management of the home is exceptional, with managers placing the needs of young people at the heart of practice. The registered manager has overseen this outstanding home for more than 10 years. A social worker described the registered manager as ‘brilliant’, adding that ‘She goes above and beyond for all the children.’

Staff praise the registered manager as ‘hands on’. Working shifts, combined with shift

observations, provides the registered manager with an excellent understanding of the day-to-day running of the home. Where any improvements can be made, feedback is given or informal development sessions are held for staff.

The application of research-informed practice is central to the home's ethos. Staff training is comprehensive and constantly evolving to meet the individual needs of the young people who stay in the home. During team training days there is also a focus on staff's personal development, such as on their learning styles and well-being, which enhances the learning environment of the home.

As a beacon of outstanding practice, the home has hosted a visit from an international child welfare organisation so that best practice could be shared to help the charity with its planned overseas short-break service.

The high quality of management audit and oversight drives the service forward. The home's overall development plan and the quality of young people's short-break reviews, alongside the home's quality of care review, provide detailed and meaningful analysis and recommendations. However, while the registered manager has wide-ranging evidence of the opinions and feedback of young people, parents and professionals, these are not consistently incorporated into the quality of care review.

Staff morale is very high, with regular reflective supervision enhancing staff well-being. A member of staff said, 'I have never felt so supported, encouraged and valued as a team member.' A clinical psychologist said, 'The staff are well trained, organised and compassionate. They understand and care about the children, and that shows in their interactions with them.'

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 difference 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: SC033919

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2XF

Responsible individual: Paul Hewitt

Registered manager: Eithne Staunton

Inspector

Victoria Jones, social care inspector

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