

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC033919
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	London Borough of Harrow
Registered provider's address	Civic Centre, Station Road, HARROW, Middlesex, HA1 2XF

Responsible individual	Christopher Spencer
Registered manager	Eithne Staunton
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	14/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective service that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC033919

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is Outstanding because:

- The home is a bastion of excellent care practice. The registered manager's improvement drive extends beyond this service. She is effective not only at enabling her own staff to consistently implement excellent and innovative practice, but also at influencing improvements and developments in the wider social care sector for disabled children.
- The registered manager has built a remarkable professional reputation. Ofsted received unanimous and unequivocally positive feedback from parents and professionals. The manager has the full confidence of children, parents, staff and professionals.
- The leaders and managers run the service with integrity and high levels of expertise. They effectively use rigorous quality assurance processes to ensure that practice is evidence-based. The strength of the team's commitment towards using innovation and creativity to promote children's positive outcomes matches their commitment towards clearly demonstrating the service's compliance with legislation.
- The leaders and manager place a strong emphasis on learning. Staff have excellent opportunities for further professional development. Training has enabled them to creatively, systematically and successfully promote children's participation, engagement, learning and achievement of personal skills and closer social integration.
- The home is extraordinarily effective at enriching children's lives. Highly dedicated and skilled staff provide children with a safe, positive, nurturing and stimulating environment that has clear boundaries. This enables children to develop an increased sense of security. From this base, they thrive and blossom.
- Strong partnerships, highly individualised care, robust risk management and insightful positive behaviour support, underpin children's safety and their exceptionally positive experiences, excellent progress and strong achievements.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It provides short breaks for up to five children and young people with learning, sensory and physical disabilities, at any one time.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/12/2014	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
20/11/2013	Full	Outstanding

At the back

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Enriching children's lives and empowering them to reach their potential is at the heart of this service. Staff are deeply sensitive towards children's' needs and feelings. Through careful observations and 'guarded empathy', they make sure that 'the voice of a child' is always heard. They anticipate children's needs and make sure that each child receives highly individualised care of excellent quality. Children have exceptionally positive experiences when receiving short-breaks. A mother described how her son loved the service so much that he was reluctant to come back to his family home afterwards. A clinical psychologist commented: 'We have always seen children happy in the facility and staff providing responsive and supportive care.' Children's positive experiences expand their horizons and enrich their lives. They thrive and blossom in a positive and nurturing environment. They make exceptional progress across different aspects of their development. Before children have their first short-break at the service, staff spend time with them in their schools. This gives children good chances to become familiar with the new adults in their lives. This gradual introduction to the service provides a firm basis for the development of trust between children and staff. Integrated planning with the parents, teachers, social workers and health professionals, and the stability of the staff team facilitate further development of this trust. Children's close ties with people other than their families supports their independence and preparation for adulthood. The appropriately adapted home's environment is full of books, toys, games, sensory and other equipment that stimulates children's imagination and learning. A large garden at the back of the house provides a safe space for various activities in the fresh air, such as running around, going down a slide, riding a bike, watching birds fly and plants grow. Most importantly, children spend time with caring and positive adults. They benefit from having intensive interactions with adults who value them for who they are and consistently nurture their well-being, interests and talents. Staff creatively and successfully promote children's participation and engagement. They enable children to understand the options that are available to them and to make positive choices. Understanding different options broadens children's awareness and improves their cognition. Making choices gives them chances to assert their individuality.	

Staff carefully guide children to safely explore new things. They run several projects, such as hair and beauty, music and storytelling. In close partnership with parents and teachers, they actively teach children various skills and monitor their progress. A head-teacher commented that the joint working enables children's positive progress towards their personal targets. This is particularly relevant for the targets relating to social interaction, personal care and independence. Some of their achievements have included increased eye contact, improved communication, better mobility, better self-regulation, sleeping at night and developing a range of practical skills, such as those relating to personal hygiene and feeding.

By sharing positive experiences, children develop friendships with their peers. They visit places of interests. They get more involved in activities in their local community. An example of this is their contribution to the home's charity work: they helped staff to bake and sell cakes to raise money for an air-ambulance. Staff effectively promote children's social integration and good citizenship values.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Regular health and safety checks ensure that the physical environment is safe and appropriately secure. In the interest of children's safety, staff use keypads and locks on the doors leading to the outside of the home. The local fire authority, parents and professionals fully support the use of these measures. Robust risk assessments relating to the environment, activities and individual children, protect children while enabling them to safely try new activities. Rigorous staff recruitment, maintaining suitably high staffing levels and staff's knowledge, skills and vigilance contribute to good safeguarding of children. Managers have developed effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection). They have regular discussions with them to evaluate the home's safeguarding practice. They clearly demonstrate transparency, continued monitoring and reflective learning. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home or when escorted by staff in the community. There have been no concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Significant incidents occur rarely and are well managed. Staff are effective at safely containing challenging situations without having to resort to physical interventions. They work closely with other professionals and	

parents to understand the meaning that a certain behaviour might have for the individual child. They help children to substitute these behaviours with more constructive ways of expressing themselves. Children become more confident communicators. They develop trust that people can understand them. They develop a feeling of being listened to and valued. With that feeling, their anxiety subsides and an increased sense of inner security emerges. Their self-awareness and self-regulation improves.

Some children have formal positive behaviour support plans. These plans provide clear guidance to staff on how to respond consistently to the behaviours as their challenging nature escalates. Insightful functional analysis underpins the high effectiveness of these behavioural strategies at reinforcing positive behaviours.

A clinical psychologist made the following comments on behalf of the CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services): "We see plans that the service write and hear discussions about children's engagement with the service and staff's thoughts about children. Staff always seem to have a positive attitude, even when faced with high level of challenges. We feel they manage challenges effectively and in fact, when we want to help families to understand how to best manage their children we have, in the past asked parents to go into the service and observe how the staff respond to their child."

A clinical nurse specialist from the disability team provided this feedback: "Staff work closely with all professionals to ensure evidence based support plans are introduced with high fidelity in a child centred & caring manner that leads to lower levels of challenging behaviour than home or school environments & promotes the happiness & well-being of the individual."

Children, parents and professionals have full confidence in the management and staff in the home. A parent wrote in the Ofsted survey that she knew that when her daughter was having a short break, she was in good hands.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
Leaders and managers are visionary and inspirational. They have high aspirations for children and are firm advocates of children's rights. They lead and run the service with integrity and high levels of expertise. They are exceptionally effective in their roles. The registered manager has suitable experience and qualifications. After many	

years of working in this home, she registered as its manager in 2008. Ofsted has consistently judged the service as Outstanding, since 2009. The home has an excellent assistant manager who has also been working in the home for a number of years. The stability of the management and staff team has contributed to the consistency of outstanding quality care.

The manager has set high professional standards for staff. She has led on creation and implementation of comprehensive policies, procedures and systems that clearly promote best care practice. Good quality one-to-one supervision meetings, team meetings and regular reviews of staff practice, including annual appraisals contribute to keeping a sharp focus on learning and development.

A comprehensive training programme includes opportunities for staff to develop further their particular professional interests and skills. They have attended training on the creative use of music, other sensory experiences and storytelling. They have effectively implemented what they have learnt in their work with children.

Since the introduction of the Quality Standards in April 2015, the managers and staff have analysed what these standards meant for their practice and evaluated the service against them. In line with the home's statement of purpose, they have continued to strive to exceed those standards while preserving the uniqueness of the home. The strength of the team's commitment towards using innovation and creativity to promote children's positive outcomes matches their commitment towards clearly demonstrating the service's compliance with legislation.

Leaders and managers have the full confidence of staff. Staff are highly complimentary about the support that they receive. They describe the managers as being brilliant, fair and very efficient.

The managers and staff make a powerful contribution to the effective integrated care that children and their families receive. A special school's family liaison advisor said about the management and staff: "Their feedback is invaluable to my role and allows me to support families in the best possible way and allows me to identify how else we as a school can help. Their feedback is crucial to supporting both pupils and families." An assistant head-teacher from a different school provided the following feedback: 'It is no exaggeration to say that this service have been the most approachable, practical, reliable and collaborative of all the agencies with which I work.'

The home is a bastion of excellent care practice. The manager has built a remarkable professional reputation. A clinical nurse specialist described the level of care offered to young people as exemplary. A social worker from a transition team said that she continued to be impressed by the home. The parents and professionals who contributed to the inspection provided unanimously and unequivocally positive feedback about the quality of the service, partnership working and children's outcomes.

The manager is effective not only at enabling her own staff to implement excellent care practice, but also at influencing improvements and developments in the wider sector. She has recently delivered a presentation on evidencing children's progress and outcomes to managers from other children's homes. Some attendees said that this was the best training that they have ever attended.

Comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance processes underpin the excellent quality of care. Outstanding strategic overview and clear development plans direct further improvement of the service. There have been many improvements, since the last inspection. The most significant ones relate to the introduction of more systematic skills teaching for children, making their individual communication profiles more comprehensive, their care reviews more dynamic and continuing to embed integrated positive behaviour management practice.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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