

# 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 home provides short breaks for up to five children with learning or physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in 2003.

At the time of this inspection, three children were having an overnight short break at the home.

### Inspection dates: 21 and 22 August 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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 October 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 12/10/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 23/06/2021      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 23/07/2019      | Full            | Outstanding          |
| 01/11/2018      | Full            | Outstanding          |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children who attend this short break service receive good-quality care and enjoy positive experiences. The facilities include a well-equipped sensory room and spacious garden with a trampoline, nest swing and roundabout for the children to enjoy.

Children's wishes and feelings are gained through social stories and one-to-one interactions. Many children are non-verbal, and staff use social stories and simple language to communicate with them. For example, staff present children with a book that contains photographs of activities in the community, to allow children to make a choice about what they would like to do during their stay.

Children make good progress from their individual starting points. Staff use a 'skills teaching record' to set targets to help children to develop their personal independence skills, such as getting dressed, washing themselves and completing laundry. Staff support children to achieve these targets during their stay, and they track their progress. When children learn to complete a skill consistently, staff work with parents and schools to develop a new outcome for children to achieve. Families say that their children's confidence and personal and social skills have improved because of attending this service.

Children's individual achievements are celebrated. Children receive 'star of the week' certificates for the progress that they make. Staff sing and clap with children to praise and applaud them. These records of achievements and special moments are important for children and represent a part of their life story which they can refer to in fondness.

Children form positive relationships with staff. Children are relaxed and comfortable with staff, who are caring and nurturing towards them. Staff understand children's needs and behaviours well and are able to respond to them effectively.

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

Staff and managers work closely with parents and other agencies to understand and assess children's needs and risks. They develop detailed care plans and risk assessments to support children during their stay.

Staff have a good understanding of children's emotional needs. They use effective de-escalation techniques to support children when their behaviour becomes heightened. Children are supported appropriately after incidents. Staff speak to them about what has happened or engage them in positive activities to help them to feel better. Following incidents, staff reflect together to help them to understand the reasons behind children's behaviours and implement appropriate plans to safeguard and support children in the future.

Children experience a thoughtful and considerate transition into the home. Managers and staff work closely with parents and children to ensure that they do not rush the process. Children come for 'tea visits' until they show signs that they are ready and comfortable to stay overnight. This approach is successful, and children feel settled and comfortable during their stay.

Children's safety and well-being are at the centre of practice in the home. If there are safeguarding concerns about children, managers and staff take prompt action and report it to the appropriate agencies. This ensures that children are given the appropriate help and support when needed.

Children's diagnosis and health needs are well understood and met by managers and staff. Staff take care to meet children's individual needs, such as ensuring that food is cut up into small pieces to avoid risks of choking.

The home environment is safe and comfortable with spaces for children to enjoy various activities. Children's bedrooms are clean and ready for children when they arrive. Bathrooms and toilets are equipped to meet children's physical needs.

Recruitment practice is not robust. Leaders and managers do not always explore or effectively record gaps in staff's employment history.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

A highly experienced, skilled and effective registered manager runs the home. The requirement raised at the last inspection has been met. The registered manager commissioned specialised training and reviewed medication practice to prevent further errors.

Leaders and managers know the children well and understand their needs and behaviours. They have high aspirations for children and work with families to support children's progress and development. They ensure that there is a sufficient level of staff to support children on a one-to-one basis. This ensures that children achieve good outcomes and have enjoyable experiences when they are at the home.

Managers and staff work closely with parents and children's professional networks. This helps them to identify any concerns and support children with their needs. Consequently, children receive well-rounded care and support from the staff during their stay.

Team meetings are regular and effective. Information from multi-disciplinary meetings is shared with the staff team. Managers and staff discuss relevant topics such as safeguarding, teaching skills and different ways of supporting children and families. There is also focus on staff training and development, which further supports good running of the service.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision that focuses on staff well-being and child-related practice. Staff performance and practice is appraised annually. This

ensures that leaders and managers have good oversight of staff practice and development.

Families, social workers and school professionals feel confident in the care that children receive from managers and staff in the home. They report that managers and staff communicate well and work closely with them to support children's needs.

## 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, The 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         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2.</p> <p>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(d)(7)(b))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that safe recruitment processes are followed and obtain a full employment history and scrutinise any gaps in employment.</p> | 1 September 2023 |

## 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:** SC033919

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** London Borough of Harrow

**Registered provider address:** Harrow Council Hub, Forward Drive, Harrow HA3 8NT

**Responsible individual:** Jacinta Kane

**Registered manager:** Eithne Staunton

## Inspector

Amena Begum, Social Care Inspector

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