

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC042978
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Margaret Nowland
Inspector	Caroline Brailsford

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Children and young people continue to benefit greatly from their short breaks. Their care is excellent and their life experiences are enriched because of this service. Children and young people who have very complex disabilities and health needs make excellent progress. They have the opportunity to try new activities, to make new friends, and to be with peers of a similar age. They build extremely trusting relationships with staff, who assist them to get the most from their short break. Despite having an outstanding judgement for several years, leaders continue to ensure that the service gets better and better. There is a raft of improvements that have had a very positive and significant impact on care since the last inspection. A new 'social pedagogy' theoretical model has been introduced, which is particularly well suited to the children and young people. The model is based on listening to children and young people's wishes and views, whatever their communication, which in turn develops their confidence. There has been training for staff, and the appointment of a 'social pedagogy champion' has ensured that the new approach works effectively. The 'champion' is energetic and highly motivated to lead the staff in this new model. One staff member said: 'We all love it, we want the kids to do well.' There is a feeling of excitement in the home because of the positive way that this has already started to impact on children and young people's experiences and confidence. There are exceptionally good links with schools to ensure that children and young people's progress is maximised. There are several examples of children and young people making excellent progress because of the exceptional relationships with teaching staff. One young person has a new communication aid, which staff have tailored to ensure that it is relevant for their short break as well as during their time at school. This has enabled the young person to communicate better, and has considerably reduced their anxiety. The home and a local school have worked very positively in collaboration with each other to ascertain another young person's views about the home, in order to determine how to move forward with the young person's placement.	

Parents and carers report 'excellent' communication with staff and managers. One parent commented very positively about this. She spoke about how the very regular communication positively influences her confidence in the service. She reflected on the high quality care saying, 'They want everything to be as good as it can be.' Parents also talked about the high level of attention to the smaller details. For example, it was noted that a young person enjoys and likes to look at balloons. As a result, staff ensured that balloons were attached to his bed ready for his admission. The young person was observed to be very happy about the balloons and his communication to staff demonstrated very positive relationships with them. It is clear that staff go to every effort to respond to children and young people's needs and to make their stay a positive one. Children and young people feel happy, comfortable and are engaged in the interesting and stimulating environment.

A piece of work has been commissioned through a local university to look at all children and young people's learning and development targets, so that their targets are smarter, more achievable and more aspirational. Children and young people's progress is optimised through this new approach. The student responsible described an 'amazing' reaction to the project from management and said that all staff were receptive. All who work at the home embrace change where it benefits children and young people. Children and young people's progress is always at the forefront of planning, and leaders are forthright in their robust approach to continuous development.

Leaders and staff strive to help young people and their families when they are in crisis. There is more of an impetus on early intervention since the last inspection. One young person is currently receiving a larger allocation of short break nights to assist her and her family during a family crisis. Managers work closely with social workers, children and young people. Their work prevents family breakdown. The service is becoming more and more flexible around the young people's needs. The manager has recently opened on all bank holidays to create more space for children and young people who urgently need the service.

All children and young people's needs are very carefully considered before their admission to the home. Pictures around the home illustrate that children and young people are cherished and that their progress is celebrated from the moment they arrive. There is a celebration every time a child or young person leaves, and they know that they will not be forgotten. This ethos helps children and young people to build their self-esteem and confidence in readiness for adulthood.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection, but the manager ensures that all concerns, however small, are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The statement of purpose is very clear, so parents and local authorities know what to expect from the service. The children and young person's guide has been redesigned since the last inspection. Children and young people have been fully involved in the process. The new document is more visual, including the clever use of photographs. It now tells the story of what a young person should expect when they are admitted.

Staffing has improved since the last inspection and agency staff are no longer used. This is because there is now a larger bank of relief staff. Also, where there were some vacancies, staff have been recruited to these. The manager has made links with local universities to ensure that a high calibre of staff are aware of any vacancies. All the posts are now filled with highly qualified staff.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to five children and young people at any one time. It is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides short breaks for children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2016	Full	Outstanding
11/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
17/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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