

SC415400

Registered provider: Gloucestershire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children who have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities. The children's placements are made under short-break arrangements. The service is delivered and managed by a local authority.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 October 2017

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

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: 31 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Children are cared for by a well-trained staff team who are committed to ensuring that they build happy and positive memories of their short-breaks experience.
- The staff team, especially the registered manager, effectively advocates for the children and their families to ensure that they receive the support and services they need.
- The registered manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the home. Development plans are in place to address these.
- The quality of the environment has improved. Children now have access to a spacious playroom, a well-equipped sensory room and new play equipment in the garden, all of which they enjoy.
- The staff are skilled in using a variety of communication methods. These support children to express themselves, make choices and be consulted about life at the home.
- Staff work well with families and other professionals regarding children moving into and on from the home. This work is undertaken with a great deal of sensitivity and at a pace appropriate for each family.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Complaints records do not consistently evidence the complainant's views of the outcome of the complaints investigation.
- Staff meeting minutes do not evidence actions set at the previous meeting being revisited and reviewed.
- Children currently have one target set. Where children are making very good progress on their target, an additional target is not set. This would help to enable children to reach their potential.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
27/10/2016	Full	Good
01/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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
39: Complaints and representations The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. In particular, complaint records need to clearly evidence the complainant's view of the investigation outcome. (Regulation 39(3))	30/11/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for leading a team which provides high quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4). In particular, where actions are set at team meeting, these should be revisited and reviewed at the next meeting.
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5). In particular, young people, where possible, should have more than one target to work towards.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive very good quality individualised care from a committed staff team. Staff are passionate about their work. They understand the anxiety parents feel having their child cared for by someone else. Building trusting, open and honest relationships with parents is fundamental; the staff team has been extremely successful at this. High

staffing levels enable the registered manager to place a core team around each child to ensure that their needs are well met.

Staff are skilled at welcoming children into the home and supporting them when they leave. Moves into the home are at a pace to suit the individual. They include visits to the child's home, parents visiting the short-breaks home, tea visits and, eventually, overnight stays. Staff plan carefully for children's visits, which is key as a number of children find the movement between school, transport and the home difficult to manage. Parents of children who have left the home thanked the staff for helping make this as stress free as possible.

Children are making good progress since accessing this short-breaks home. Each child has a target set, which is frequently reviewed. There are some children who have made excellent progress with their current target and would benefit from having an additional target set. This would help them reach their individual potential.

Staff are extremely skilled in communicating with children. A variety of methods are used that are dependent on the child. The registered manager has allocated one member of staff as a communication champion. The member of staff is very passionate about this work and are driving forward further improvements. This member of staff said, 'Communication is key.' She and the team effectively link some of the children's behaviours to frustration with communication. Evidence of the effectiveness of this work can be seen in the reduction of behavioural incidents.

Children take part in a very wide range of activities. The children's 'My Journals' demonstrate all they do and the fun that the children have during their short-breaks visits. Parents commented that their children enjoy the activities. As well as being fun, the activities have improved the children's social skills and confidence.

Major building work at the home has almost finished. Children now benefit by having a spacious, well-equipped playroom and a sensory room. There is new play equipment in the garden and bedrooms have been redecorated. These improvements provide children with a stimulating, fun, welcoming place to stay. During the inspection, a new boundary fence was being completed. This will provide unobtrusive fencing between the home and the main roads.

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

Safeguarding systems at the home are strong, applied in practice and protect children. Staff have a very good understanding of these systems and the additional vulnerabilities of the children whom they care for. Regular safeguarding training ensures that their practice reflects developments in this area.

Children's behaviour is well managed. Staff use their in-depth knowledge of each child to identify any behavioural cues, triggers or changes. This helps the staff to distract or de-escalate behaviours at an early stage. This approach has been extremely effective. Restraint is very rarely used. When it is used it is very low level, such as caring guides.

Records of restraint are comprehensive.

Each child has a personal evacuation plan in case of a fire. These identify any additional support a child may need.

Each child has a bespoke missing person protocol in place, which, if required, provides key information for other professionals as well as actions to be taken by the staff team. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home.

Robust systems are in place to ensure that children's healthcare needs are met. The receipt, storage and administration of medication is well managed. Staff receive additional training to meet children's health needs from a variety of healthcare professionals.

There have been no new staff members recruited since the last inspection. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are in line with safer recruitment practices, which protects children from those who may wish to harm them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

At the previous inspection, three requirements and two recommendations were made. These have all been met. Children's case records have all been updated and are now specific to this home. Staff are no longer using vague or emotive language in these records. Records of restraint contain all required information, and restraint is rarely used. The reports from the independent visitor are received by Ofsted in a timely manner and contain responses from the registered manager and responsible individual. The environment has improved with the removal of the institutionalised window restrictors.

The home is managed by an experienced and well-qualified person. She understands the strengths and areas for development within the home. With input from the staff team, a plan is in place to address the developmental areas with the main focus on enhancing the short-breaks experience of the children. Staff see consultation with children and their families as an essential part of this process.

The registered manager ensures that a high standard of care is provided for each child. This is achieved partly via her monitoring systems, but most importantly through leading by example. Her role modelling, linked with the ethos of the home, is evident in the high quality of the care that children receive. Staff are also committed to looking at how they can improve their practice, which will improve the service they provide for children and their families.

Children benefit from being cared for by an experienced, stable and committed staff team. The team, especially the registered manager, effectively advocates for the children and their families and will challenge where it feels that the support and services needed are not being provided. Parents and other professionals praised the staff for this work. One professional said this home is 'one of my favourite places'. Another said, 'they deliver a high standard of personalised care' and that they are 'very impressed with the

work that is going on'. Parents said 'it's brilliant' and that their children 'love' coming to the home.

There is an appropriate complaints system in place but complaints records do not consistently evidence the view of the complainant on the outcome of the investigation.

Support systems for the staff team are very good. Staff receive regular, formal, good-quality supervision where they reflect on their practice. Regular team meetings are held where the core discussion is of the children. Minutes of the team meeting do not currently evidence the actions from the previous meeting being reviewed. As well as these formal systems, staff receive a lot of informal support from the registered manager and their peers. This, they felt, was invaluable.

Staff receive good quality training, which is based on the needs of the young people, the teams and the individual staff member's developmental needs. The manager ensures that once a year the whole staff team has a week dedicated to training. During this period, no children stay at the home so as to ensure that all staff, including waking-night staff, are able to attend the training.

The home is regularly visited by an independent person. The reports of these visits cover all required areas and are used by the registered manager to improve practice.

The home's statement of purpose is current and provides an accurate reflection of the service.

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: SC415400

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Shire Hall, Westgate Street, GLOUCESTER GL1 2TG

Responsible individual: Amanda Henderson

Registered manager: Trudy Barnfield

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, social care inspector

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