

SC030677

Registered provider: West Berkshire Council - Social Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a local authority and provides short breaks for children with physical and learning disabilities. The home is registered to provide overnight stays for up to six children.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2024.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

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 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Good
30/03/2023	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good
24/02/2020	Interim	Not judged

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff support children to make excellent progress. This includes children developing their communication, self-care and independence skills. Staff continually aspire for children to develop their skills and experiences, at a pace that is individual to each child.

Children enjoy their short-break stays and are excited to arrive and to see who else they will be staying with, pointing at photos of their friends and the staff looking after them.

There is a small cohesive staff team, who know the children well and work together to provide them with the best possible experiences. The home is well resourced and includes a sensory room and a variety of toys that children like to play with. Children enjoy a range of activities in the community, including going to the farm, soft play centres, museums and pantomimes. Videos and pictures are shared with parents so that they can see the activities and fun that their children are having while away from home.

Staff have positive relationships with parents and communicate with them effectively. Parents feel confident that their children are happy and safe when using the service. One parent said that the home was fantastic, the staff are great and their child loves attending short breaks.

Staff are skilled at supporting children's health needs and have suitable and relevant training. Children have highly detailed health plans to enable staff to respond to their needs. Staff work jointly with specialist nurses, occupational health and paediatricians to ensure that the children's specific health needs are met.

Staff use children's individual communication aids to help the children to share their views, wishes and feelings. This helps children to choose the activities and meals that they would like during their stay. The consistent use of communication tools has supported children to develop and expand their communication skills.

The home is well maintained and contains all the equipment and supportive aids that the children need. Each bedroom has a theme, and they are all well furnished. When children arrive, they can choose their own bedding to help personalise their bedroom.

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

Safeguarding concerns and incidents are rare. However, the manager and staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding processes and know how to respond to any potential safeguarding concerns, should they arise.

Positive behaviour is celebrated, and children are regularly praised for achievements or for trying new activities. This is recognised through certificates and the home's 'wow'

board. Children like receiving this recognition and praise and are proud of their achievements.

Staff support children to understand safety in the home, including what to do if the fire alarms sound, how to make a complaint or what to do if they feel they are being bullied. Pictorial prompts help children to understand these processes.

Children are generally settled when having overnight stays. They do not go missing from home and staff do not need to use physical interventions. Staff recognise changes in children's behaviours, allowing them to quickly respond to small changes in presentation or behaviour. The positive relationships between staff and children allow staff to provide reassurance and comfort to ensure that children do not become distressed.

The home has specialist equipment to support staff to meet the children's needs. This includes specialist beds and a spa bath that the children particularly enjoy. Risk assessments are in place for all equipment and their use is reviewed by an occupational therapist. However, the in-house assessments do not always detail which professional has authorised the assessment for the specialist equipment. This has not had any negative impact on children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is aspirational for the service. She uses monitoring and review systems to continually improve the home and the children's experiences, and to ensure that staff are constantly developing their skills. The manager's knowledge of the children, the progress that they have made and how they can continue to develop is supporting children's ongoing achievements.

The manager's partnership working with other professionals is a key strength. Joint team meetings are held with social workers every six months. In addition, the manager meets with the manager of the children with disability social work team to identify new children coming into the service, to look at referrals and to discuss the needs and progress of the children who are already staying at the home. This allows for information-sharing and helps to understand who is responsible for what and how they can work together effectively to better support children.

Social workers are exceptionally positive about the service, the care that children receive and the level of communication with the staff. One social worker said the standard of care and the support to help the children develop their self-care skills are excellent.

The manager has built positive relationships with the staff at the on-site school, which has enabled consistency of practice with the children in the home and the school.

The manager uses research-informed practice sessions in monthly team meetings to help staff to further develop their skills and knowledge, and to share good practice. These monthly meetings are being used effectively and are an information-sharing forum as well as a place for learning and development.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when staff review children's plans, they identify which health professional has originally made the decision regarding the need for the particular approach to the child's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 36, paragraph 7.20)

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: SC030677

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Berkshire Council - Social Care

Registered provider address: Council Office, Market Street, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5LD

Responsible individual: Dora Gouveia-Schofield

Registered manager: Joanna Romanowska

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025