

2502334

Registered provider: Brighter Futures for Children

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provision was re-registered under Brighter Futures for Children on 29 November 2018. The home can provide care for up to five children who have a learning and/or physical and/or disability and/or sensory impairment.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2018.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 July 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
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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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children receive care from staff who are smiley, passionate and enthusiastic. The well-established team works hard to maximise and enrich the children's experiences. This creates an atmosphere which is full of warmth and love where staff are nurturing and supportive of the children.

Excellent links with health professionals ensure that the children's complex needs are met. A specialist healthcare professional spoke of the 'intelligent interest' displayed by staff in recent training, stating that, through the care that they provide, the provision 'stands out' as a provider. In-depth risk assessments underpin health plans and medication administration processes. This provides clear, detailed guidance for staff. This enables specialised healthcare to be delivered to the highest standard.

Staff have high aspirations for all the children regardless of their ability. Every achievement is celebrated with pride and joy. One child, who received a certificate for walking five thousand steps, experienced a round of applause with broad smiles from everybody. Focus placed on setting personal goals helps children to make gradual steps toward gaining independence.

Relationships with parents are excellent. Family events enable parents to socialise in the home setting. Regular 'parent surgeries' allow staff to share strategies to support the consistency of children's care. A parent complimented the team's ability to listen, share ideas and work in partnership. One parent said they were touched by staff's 'good sense and level of understanding of what parents may be going through and what they need.'

Children's bedrooms are colourful and welcoming. They truly capture the individuality of each child. The range of resources available caters for the children's interests and ability. The ambiance is one of warmth and homeliness, where children can relax and feel secure. The environment requires updating, and plans are under discussion to modernise and refresh the home and garden. For example, refurbishment of the bathroom will provide height adjustable equipment, aiding children's independence.

Equality and diversity are promoted in various ways, from supervisions and staff meetings through to children's care plans. Children's identity and cultural needs are embraced and inform their experiences. For example, one child is supported to say her grace at mealtimes and a prayer at bedtime.

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

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. This is supported through a spectrum of safeguarding training, which covers themes on exploitation, self-harm and parental substance misuse. Any unexplained marks or injuries noted are fully explored and the child's social worker is then informed. Additional systems record signs of neglect. This enables the manager to monitor this carefully, establishing whether a pattern is emerging that requires escalation to safeguarding professionals.

Impact assessments inform decisions on whether a child's needs can be met and if they are a suitable mix with the group. Children who are on shared-care packages are carefully matched to ensure that their experience is positive. The comprehensive approach to risk assessment informs safe practice.

Children's needs are effectively met. Care plans link seamlessly with education and healthcare plans. Close relationships between families, health professionals and school ensure that approaches can be shared and reviewed. This contributes to effective management of children's behaviour, developing children's communication, and in responding to their physical and emotional health. As a result, children make good progress proportionate to their ability.

There is a diligent approach which ensures that children's views, wishes and feelings are sought. Children's life journey books contain pictures of them engaged in tasks, such as choosing which duvet cover they may like from a choice of photographs. Children like looking at their books, pointing out things that they would like to do again. A bright blue board with a huge yellow umbrella, entitled 'rainy days', displays pec symbols of activities the children enjoy doing. This included hand massages and jigsaw puzzles.

Staff are highly receptive and attuned to children's methods of communication, however subtle these may be. A dictionary has been developed linking a child's vocalisations to their meaning, and this enables staff to understand and reinforce her speech. This child, who initially only communicated through one sound, is now using up to a hundred words. Social stories, use of pecs symbols and Makaton complement and enhance communication.

A visiting advocacy service is provided. Although a new service is commissioned, the manager has secured approval for the previous long-standing advocate to continue to work alongside the new advocate. This benefits the children enormously as they are comfortable and familiar with her.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The highly experienced registered manager is dynamic, ambitious and forward thinking. Her organised approach means that records are meticulous and the home is managed to the highest standard. She continually strives for excellence, drawing on different models of care to inform her vision for the service. The strength of her leadership inspires a culture where the staff are focused and committed. They work together to deliver an exceptional level of care.

The manager places great emphasis on personal development. Supervision tasks link closely to performance targets which are set out in staff appraisals. Training, reading and research form part of this learning process. Staff respect the clear direction that they receive, feeling valued and supported which helps them to extend their knowledge, confidence and skills.

The manager is conscientious and determined in her efforts to advocate and champion for the rights of the children. This has led to her challenging services to develop the consistency of partnership working, and to secure services and resources for the

advantage of the children.

Professionals speak approvingly of the manager and her team. A social worker commented on the staff team's skill in working with families, stating that 'there is no confusion between the home and family'. A headteacher described the manager as 'rock solid' and that she 'leaves no stone unturned' with her leading a service which, for some families, is an absolute 'lifeline'.

Training is extensive and varied. Staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications to look after the children in their care. Training is inclusive of end-of-life care and this extends the breadth of skills within the team. As a result, staff are highly competent in managing the children's complex health needs and life-limiting conditions with skill, care and sensitivity.

The manager's monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation of care practice is highly effective. Actions identified underpin and inform the home's development, as well as contributing to the strategic development of the service. The manager values professional discussions with the independent visitor and other professionals, using these discussions to generate new ideas to further enhance the quality of this outstanding 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: 2502334

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighter Futures for Children

Registered provider address: Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 2LU

Responsible individual: Mark Fowler

Registered manager: Helena Macieira Baptista

Inspector

Joe Davys, Social Care Inspector

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