

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC018039
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Hamelin Trust
Registered provider address	Unit 19, Radford Crescent, Billericay, Essex CM12 0DU

Responsible individual	Stephen Fisher
Registered manager	Frances-Anne Callaghan
Inspector	Joanna Heller

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The setting provides short breaks for children who have learning disabilities and associated complex needs. At the last inspection, three requirements and two recommendations were set, all of which have been addressed. The manager now ensures that all staff references are verified to validate their authenticity. This provides improved safeguards to prevent unsuitable people gaining employment in the home.</p> <p>Before children use the service, a comprehensive assessment of need is undertaken. Sensitive, well-planned transitions take place. Before offering a service, the manager gains an understanding of the child's needs and the short-break service's ability to meet them. She gathers information from the child and their parents. The manager also liaises with other professionals before arranging any visits to the service. This process is aimed at supporting the child at their own pace. This reflects the individualised care that the children continue to receive when staying at the home.</p> <p>The children feel safe in their surroundings, and look forward to their visits to the home. They enjoy a variety of activities, such as going to the local park and the trampoline centre, and using the well-equipped sensory room. The staff work on supporting the children with individual developmental targets, and the level of progress made by the children is highly individual in accordance with their particular abilities. The staff encourage the children's communication through the effective use of pictorial systems and sign language. Visual prompts and information are displayed throughout the home. The children are encouraged to make suggestions about the service, and the staff act on this feedback.</p> <p>The staff understand that a child's behaviour is a means of communication. They have a good understanding of the children's individual behaviours and what they mean. As a result, no sanctions are used, and physical intervention is rare. Effective staff deployment means that the children have the level of support that they require, and as such their individual needs are well met. Significant incidents are rare, and there have been no complaints since the last inspection. When any concerns arise, these are well managed and the information is shared with the</p>	

parents and appropriate professionals.

Many of the children have used the short-break service for some years. Staff changes are minimal, which provides consistency for the children. This enables the children to be supported by well-trained staff with whom they have positive, long-term relationships. As a result, they receive individualised and child-focused support. Feedback from parents is positive. One parent said, 'There's lots of love. I know she is in good hands there.' One social worker said, 'The staff are there for the children and the service is all focused on the needs of the children.'

Parents and professionals comment on how committed the service is to helping the child and their family in times of crisis, ensuring the child's needs are very much central to the support provided. For example, when a child has been unable to access full-time education, the home has stepped in as temporary daycare, giving the family much-needed support. The social worker commented, 'Without them [the short-break service] his foster-care placement would have broken down.'

Since the last inspection, the manager has reviewed the medication systems in place, bringing improved oversight to the process. All staff who administer medication and deliver complex carer tasks are suitably trained, and assessed as competent. As a result, there have been no medication errors in the last six months.

The home is suitably maintained, spacious, clean and safe. The children benefit from an environment that meets their needs. Any adaptations or equipment required are provided. Fire arrangements are robust. Each child has a personal evacuation plan, which means that the staff have a quick reference on how to support them should an emergency evacuation be required.

A new statement of purpose is in place. It reflects the services that the home offers clearly. The manager and the organisation utilise quality assurance systems effectively to identify and promote the service development. The manager demonstrates good leadership, and continually seeks ways to improve the service. Feedback from parents and partner agencies is highly positive about the quality of support provided and the partnerships established. Parents, foster carers and social workers refer to the service as 'outstanding'. Their comments include:

- 'They have been a lifesaver.'
- 'Staff are absolutely lovely, so helpful and supportive.'
- 'The care is fantastic.'
- 'I have to be sure where I'm sending my baby is safe. Everything feels right, it feels really good.'
- 'Staff have a very can-do attitude.'
- 'It's a brilliant short-break service. They have completely responded to his needs and gone above and beyond.'

The short-break service continues to deliver good-quality individualised care. The manager has addressed all areas identified for improvement from the last

inspection.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a registered charity trust. The home provides short-term respite care for children who have learning and/or physical disabilities, some of whom may also have sensory impairment. The home is registered for six children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/08/2016	Full	Good
14/12/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/05/2015	Full	Good
19/02/2015	Interim	Sustained 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children 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 4234, 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/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017