

1248979

Registered provider: Little Belsteads Care Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to seven children aged from eight to 17 with learning disabilities. Five children currently live at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2024	Full	Good
13/02/2023	Full	Good
13/05/2021	Full	Good
18/06/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

Since the last full inspection, two children have moved into the home and two children have moved on. The inspector spent time with five children. This included individual discussions, participation in group activities and children's daily routines.

Children have positive experiences and make measured progress from their starting points. Staff provide good-quality care to meet children's individual needs.

The relationships between staff and children are strong. Staff act as positive role models. They respond to children with high levels of respect and warmth. This gives children a sense of stability, which supports their emotional and social development.

Children enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. They lead active and healthy lifestyles, participating in weekly gymnastics and swimming clubs. All of the children enjoyed a short break at a local beach resort. Recent outings to a trampoline park, railway museum and soft-play centre reflect children's interests. This varied range of opportunities improves children's well-being and helps them to develop friendships with each other.

Staff actively encourage children with their learning. Staff help children to achieve high attendance at school or college by maintaining consistent and familiar routines. Staff maintain effective levels of communication with school staff to reduce any gaps in children's learning.

Staff celebrate children's milestones and recognise children's achievements. Pictures and photos provide an important keepsake for children to reflect on their successes. One child has been able to return to their family home. This was because of staff's support and the all-round progress the child had made.

The home is spacious and well-appointed with extensive gardens. Children have personalised bedrooms that are furnished in line with their preferences and needs. However, there are damaged walls and worn paintwork that do not reflect a homely environment.

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

Staff are trained in understanding effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities to safeguard the children. The staff have good knowledge of the children's additional vulnerabilities.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support strategies are detailed, regularly updated and followed by staff. This has provided staff with a range of personalised strategies to support children when they are distressed.

Staff use physical intervention rarely. When these are necessary, they are proportionate and used as a last resort to keep children safe.

Managers ensure that safer recruitment and selection procedures for staff are good. Thorough checks are undertaken for permanent staff, which link to comprehensive interview processes. Regularly, agency staff are subject to strong checking procedures. This ensures that only the most suitable candidates work with children.

There are appropriate safeguarding procedures. Generally, safeguarding concerns are referred to the local authority designated officer promptly. However, on one occasion, there was delay in this, which reduced the necessary safeguards for children on this occasion.

Generally, managers conduct detailed investigations into staff practice concerns. Learning is identified where staff practice has fallen short. However, one investigation conducted by an independently commissioned social care professional lacked the scrutiny necessary. This investigation had to be revisited to provide further assurances that concerns had been appropriately explored.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is qualified and has the skills to manage the home. She is supported by a long-standing and knowledgeable head of care. Managers are child centred and committed. However, there are several weaknesses in the leadership and management of the home that need attention.

Internal managerial monitoring systems require improvement. Following two incidents of physical intervention, staff were not spoken to and the exploration of children's views was not clear. This has the potential to reduce the prompt identification of any wider learning from these interventions. Plans to support children's independence and skills are not individualised or matched to children's abilities. This means the pace of children's progress in this area is not always evident. Some staff use derogatory references in children's case notes. These references are not objective and result in some information that is difficult to monitor by managers.

Feedback from families is mixed. A parent has raised concerns. Although the manager has responded to some of these concerns through the safeguarding procedures, other matters have not been responded to. These have not been appropriately handled using the home's complaint's procedure. One parent was highly positive about the quality of care provided and the planned move into the home for their child.

One social worker identified a delay in managers sharing important information relating to an incident. They felt that communication was not as good as it could be on this

occasion. Generally, social workers provided positive feedback about the effectiveness of collaborative working with staff and managers.

Important training in supporting alternative communication systems for children is planned but has not been provided. This is despite a high number of children requiring the use of communication aids to express their views. The staff have recently attended a bespoke autism-awareness training.

Two staff members have not received regular supervision sessions in line with the home's policy. Some staff have not had an annual appraisal within the required timescale. This does not ensure that these staff have received all the support they need to reflect on their practice.

Staff access development opportunities, including consultations with a clinical psychologist. Staff say that they receive good support from managers.

Managers ensure that there are enough staff on duty to meet agreed levels of supervision and the needs of children safely. Managers understand staffing trends. Any staffing turnover is addressed through effective staff recruitment drives.

The manager's internal quality of care review contains areas of good evaluation and reflection. Managers are aware of the strengths and areas of development in the care provided. They have the capacity to make the improvements needed.

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, The 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that allegations against staff are referred to the local authority designated officer without delay, and ensure that investigations into safeguarding concerns are properly and thoroughly investigated.	18 October 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))	18 October 2024
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	18 October 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is decorated and maintained to a consistently good standard throughout. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, ensure that all staff attend training in using alternative communication systems. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should develop effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant persons. In particular, the registered person should ensure that levels of communication are established and adhered to with children's social workers. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff supervision and appraisal is delivered in accordance with the home's policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1248979

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Little Belsteads Care Home Limited

Registered provider address: Windsor House, Bayshill Road, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire GL50 3AT

Responsible individual: Peter Adams

Registered manager: Jennifer Reade

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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