

2513339

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to five children who present with challenging and complex behaviour. The manager was registered with Ofsted in January 2019.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 July 2019

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: 16 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: A compliance notice was issued on 24 May 2019 in relation to concerns about children's welfare following high-level behavioural incidents and a decline in the children's living environment. A monitoring visit took place on 11 June 2019 to assess the changes. The compliance notice was met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children have moved on since the last inspection. The two remaining children have lived at the home for over two years prior to the change of provider. The children relate and respond to staff positively because of the strong relationships that they have built. Staff provide a caring and nurturing environment for the children to communicate openly with them. This results in the staff really knowing the children well and gaining a clear understanding of their wishes and feelings.

Staff have high aspirations for the children. They encourage and support them with their individual education packages and future goals. One child recently sat her GCSE examinations and is now in employment. The other child attends a construction training course. Both children are learning valuable skills that will help them into a successful adult life.

The children enjoy a wide variety of activities at the home and in the community. The children enjoy going for meals, shopping trips and days out to a theme park. One child is due to go abroad on holiday with staff. This has been planned as a celebration of her achievements in education. Providing children with new experiences gives them the opportunity to develop their social skills and interests further.

The home has recently undergone refurbishment. It provides a well-decorated and well-maintained environment for the children. The children were consulted throughout this process. The children know that their opinions matter, as their views resulted in changes to the original plans. The home is now decorated to suit the children's taste.

A strength of the home is the importance placed on contact for the children and their families. Staff provide transport and/or facilitate supervised contact in line with the children's care plans. The high level of support that staff provide enables children to build and repair important relationships.

A child who recently moved on was able to return to her parents' care. The staff ensured a positive ending by enjoying a meal out with the child. The staff continue to keep in touch and offer support. The child's parent said, 'They always did way more than I ever expected. They are still supporting us by transporting her to work. All the staff are lovely. She would not be living with us if it wasn't for the work that they did with her.'

Each child has a memory book of their time spent at the home. These are very personalised and provide lovely memories for the children to keep. However, the books have not been updated for some months and contain no recent entries.

Staff do independence work with the children. One of the children excels in this area. However, one of the children is reluctant and needs to be encouraged to be less reliant on staff. Independence targets require clarity to ensure that each child gains the necessary life skills, such as budgeting and the confidence to travel on public transport.

Health appointments are generally well monitored and kept up to date. However, one child has not received dental treatment for some time. Appointments have been made, but the child has consistently refused to attend due to being anxious. No key-work sessions have been undertaken to support and consider imaginative ways of encouraging the child to attend. Failure to address non-engagement with dental appointments is likely to result in long-term poor oral health.

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

Recent multi-agency meetings have been held to agree plans to keep the children safe. The care plans are well organised, detailed and show that each child's needs are fully known. Staff work well with external agencies to ensure that the children are provided with individual support packages. A youth offending worker said, 'The manager is very good at keeping us in the loop. Staff have supported the child all the way. Honestly, I wish all people could be that engaging. They have helped me to help him.'

Staff help children to learn how to keep themselves safe, through general discussion and comprehensive key-work sessions. This ensures that children are equipped with the necessary skills to recognise unsafe situations and respond appropriately.

Staff offer children incentives to help them to change their behaviours and to encourage them to make positive choices. These incentives include enjoying extra activities with staff or friends. The children respond well to this. One of the children has done so well that she was able to independently attend a festival with her friends, due to the responsible behaviour that she now displays.

A child who has recently moved on had a significant history of going missing. Prior to leaving, he went missing from the home several times. Staff diligently followed the procedures outlined in his individual protocol on each occasion. By following guidance and keeping the lines of communication open, staff ensured his safe return consistently.

There have been two sanctions since the last inspection. Both were appropriately managed and led to room searches being undertaken due to suspicions of drug misuse. However, daily logs highlight that there have been two other occasions when staff had strong suspicions of cannabis use. Staff failed to implement the home's own policy and did not complete a room search to ensure that drugs were not on the premises. A sanction was not given, and no follow-up work was undertaken to enable the child to recognise unacceptable behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The experienced manager has been in post since December 2018 and was registered in January 2019. She holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Since the last inspection, the manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that practice at the home has been significantly strengthened. She has taken time to reflect on the day-to-day running of the home and the changes required to ensure that children receive

consistent good-quality care. This methodical approach has led to the necessary improvements and successfully achieving a stable environment for the children and staff.

Staff said that they feel supported in their roles and they are positive about the recent changes. Staff now have an awareness of the procedures to follow, and their confidence when managing a challenging situation has improved.

The manager and staff have fully included the children in decision-making about the changes. The staff have used children's input to create a new children's guide. The guide now details information and guidance on curfews and risk-taking behaviour such as substance abuse. Listening to children and working with them through difficult situations helps them to understand the reasons why rules and boundaries are required.

All staff have now received specific training to enable them to meet children's individual needs. This includes autism awareness, positive behaviour support, and a combined course on managing child criminal and sexual exploitation and missing from home. Future courses are planned in restorative justice, risk assessment and protective behaviour, which shows the organisation's ongoing commitment to increasing the staff's knowledge. These courses help staff to understand issues that have an impact on the children's lives and result in the children gaining greater confidence in staff's abilities.

The independent visitor's monthly detailed reports contain actions for improvement. The manager works well with the independent visitor and values and acts on the advice given.

Eight requirements were set at the last inspection. One of these requirements was met at the monitoring visit in June. The manager has met, to good effect, the remaining seven requirements.

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
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and	23/08/2019

children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(2(a)(iii)) In particular, ensure that children attend their dental appointments.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(iii))	23/08/2019

Recommendations

- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

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: 2513339

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

Registered provider address: Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford,
Central Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Responsible individual: Kenneth Harvey

Registered manager: Amy Clark

Inspectors

Lynne Drage: social care inspector

Natalie Burton: 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 <http://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 <http://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019