

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 home provides care for up to five children who require social and emotional support.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2020.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 8 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/12/2021	Full	Good
08/07/2019	Full	Good
16/05/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are generally making progress at this home. However, concerns regarding the leadership and management and the ineffective safeguarding of a child on one occasion have compromised the quality of care.

There were five children living at the home at the time of this inspection. Since the last inspection, two children have moved into the home and two children have moved on from the home.

Four of the children have education places and are making good progress with their education. One child is a school prefect. One child is due to start a junior Duke of Edinburgh's Award. At the time of the inspection, one child, who is approaching adulthood, had a short period out of education before starting work at a supermarket. The child is being encouraged to start an apprenticeship. Staff attend children's parents' evenings. Staff hold children's education in high regard.

Children are encouraged to spend time with their families and friends. A parent described the staff as 'brilliant'. Children have made friends at school and spend time with them outside of school doing various enjoyable activities. Children spend time with people who are important to them and are developing good friendships.

Children attend clubs and take part in a range of activities, including day trips, boxing club and bowling club. Children have weekly opportunities to request different activities, which the staff facilitate. The children have had a holiday to the seaside. Children experience enriching activities and opportunities to try new things. They are helped to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Children's moves into and on from the home are managed sensitively and are well planned. Two children, who have recently moved into the home, both say that they feel very settled at the home. The children's independent reviewing officer is impressed with the care provided by the staff. Two of the children who have moved on from the home have continued to have outreach support from the staff. Children are helped to prepare for moving in and on from the home at a pace that is appropriate for them.

The home is spacious and has various communal rooms for children to relax in. Children's bedrooms are personalised. Photos of the children are displayed in the home. The children benefit from a large garden and a gaming room. However, some of the internal doors need repainting and there is some rubbish in the garden. This detracts from an otherwise homely environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

There has been one significant concern regarding staff's safeguarding practice. An allegation made by a child was recorded by staff in the home's general running log. The information was noted by the inspector during the inspection. The log had not been reviewed by the manager. There was no incident report completed and the manager was not informed of the allegation. Consequently, there has been a significant delay for input from the local authority designated officer. Ofsted was not informed and there has been no investigation or learning from the incident. The responsible individual followed safeguarding procedures during the inspection once the concern had been identified.

There has been one incident of physical intervention. The intervention was appropriate and proportionate. The manager reviewed the incident; however, he did not identify that the record details are unclear about which staff applied the hold. The description regarding the hold is lacking. Some of the de-escalation techniques used are unclear and are not written in a child-friendly way. Not identifying and addressing learning points does not help to develop staff practice.

There have been several missing-from-home incidents. Staff have managed these well. Staff follow children, and children are offered independent return home interviews. However, two children who have been missing from home do not have a missing-from-home protocol. During the inspection, the staff were unable to access a current risk assessment for a child who had been missing from the home. Staff need clear and accessible guidance to ensure that incidents continue to be managed effectively.

The manager recognises when children's presenting risks increase. The manager has worked with a multi-agency approach to agree safety plans for children. He has taken appropriate action to help keep vulnerable children safe.

The manager and staff encourage children to take balanced risks. Some children use public transport independently. One child is learning to drive. The manager understands what appropriate risk taking is for the individual children. Children are learning to become more independent safely.

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

The manager is experienced and has a relevant qualification. He has been registered for over two years and is supported by an experienced deputy manager. However, since the last inspection, there has been a decline in the effectiveness of the management of the home.

The manager has not had effective oversight of all children's incidents. Three children were involved in a missing-from-home incident, and an incident report was only completed for one child. Consequently, important information about staff

practice was missed. The staff's practice has not been addressed and there has been no reflection on or learning from this incident.

The manager has not ensured that all staff receive regular supervision. The quality of some supervision is poor. Staff do not always have good development and learning opportunities.

The staff receive training. Most staff have a level 3 diploma or are working towards it within agreed time frames. However, two members of staff have not completed the level 3 diploma within the agreed time frames. Some staff do not have up-to-date physical intervention training. None of the staff have completed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder training, despite this being necessary. Staff do not have all the necessary training to meet all the children's needs.

Some of the children's and staff's records could not be accessed during the inspection. Some staff records are held off site. The electronic system that the manager and staff use did not allow access to some staff supervision records and a child's healthcare plan. Some of the records are confusing and disorganised.

The manager has informed Ofsted of notifiable incidents without delay, except for one incident that he was not aware of. The notifications do not provide all the relevant information. The manager does not always update Ofsted unless prompted. This makes it difficult for Ofsted to have a current view of how safeguarding is managed at the home.

Staff say that managers are supportive and approachable. Staff feel confident to talk openly with managers because they listen.

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 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; 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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that staff understand their roles in relation to safeguarding children and act in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies.	15 February 2023

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)) In particular, ensure that: there is effective oversight and monitoring of all incidents involving children; the registered person identifies and addresses any staff practice concerns and takes effective action in relation to any lessons learned; relevant staff recruitment information, training records and supervision records are easy to understand and accessible; children's risk assessments and missing-from-home protocols are clear, give staff guidance and contain up-to-date information; children's physical intervention records are clear and contain relevant information; when the incidents are reviewed, if there is improvement needed regarding staff's recording or language, this is appropriately addressed.	15 April 2023
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—	15 June 2023

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) In particular: ensure that all staff complete the level 3 diploma within agreed time frames; provide all staff with physical intervention training or refreshers within appropriate timescales; ensure that all staff complete training in relation to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c)) In particular: ensure that staff receive regular and good-quality supervision; ensure that staff are helped to reflect on and develop their practice; review previous actions from supervision sessions and ensure that appropriate targets are set for staff.	15 April 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children. In particular, ensure that internal doors are redecorated where needed and rubbish from the back garden is removed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that records of notifiable events include all relevant information of the incident and a description of the action taken and the outcome of any resulting investigation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.14)

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: 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: Joy Piper

Registered manager: James Hardy

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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