

SC033120

Registered provider: Luton Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority. It provides short breaks and respite care for children with additional needs, complex health needs and/or behaviour that is difficult to manage.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2012.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 April 2022

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/04/2021	Full	Good
02/10/2019	Full	Good
06/02/2019	Full	Good
12/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are introduced to the home very gradually. Before the children stay at the home, they visit with their parents and are given welcome booklets. Children's time at the home is built up from tea visits up to overnight stays. The manager arranges a review with parents and the child's social worker shortly after the start of overnight stays. This provides the opportunity to review how the child has settled and identify any actions that need to be taken. Parents speak highly of the care that staff provide. Parents and children are given reassurance and time to adjust to respite care. Parents are confident in the care provided.

Staff are caring and calm, and they take a genuine interest in children. Staff have positive relationships with the children, who are happy and enjoy spending time with them.

Some children have complex communication needs. Staff understand how to communicate with them effectively. A communication passport has recently been developed to further improve staff's interactions with children. Staff help children to feel heard and understood.

Managers ensure that children have opportunities to stay at the same time as their friends.

Children can choose from a range of activities and day trips. Children have attended a disability-friendly circus, enjoyed time in country parks. They can take part in activities to encourage independence, including cooking and baking. The range of experiences is enjoyable and enriching.

Staff respect children's religious and cultural needs, such as specific food storage. Managers ensure that parents who do not speak English have an interpreter for welfare calls before their child stays, to hand over information after stays and to attend reviews.

The home is welcoming and bright. The children benefit from various communal rooms, including a sensory room and soft-play room. There is a large garden with inclusive play equipment. Bedrooms meet a range of complex needs. Children choose their bedding and are encouraged to bring personal items on stays. The managers have planned a full refurbishment of the home.

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

Children are safeguarded. The deputy manager has developed a safeguarding reporting form that gives staff a step-by-step guidance on how to manage and report incidents should they occur. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and are well equipped to manage safeguarding incidents.

The manager has ensured that risk assessments for children are individualised. Regularly reviewed assessments give staff clear information about identified risks and how to safely manage them. Detailed risk assessments that are easy to understand help staff to keep children safe.

Behaviour support plans give staff good guidance on proactive strategies and de-escalation techniques to help children manage difficult emotions. Staff use positive behaviour reinforcement and do not use consequences. Children's behaviour is managed well.

The staff rarely use physical interventions, but when they do, the interventions are appropriate and proportionate. The manager monitors and reviews the records of every physical intervention. This close monitoring means that the manager has good oversight and that physical interventions are used minimally.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The experienced registered manager holds the equivalent of a level 5 diploma in management. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager. Staff benefit from the manager's experience and leadership.

Staff benefit from regular and effective supervision. They say that the managers are supportive and give good guidance. Good supervision means that staff have relevant guidance and development opportunities.

The managers and staff have good partnership working with social workers. One social worker said that staff communicate well with them, provide excellent care for children and attend reviews. Partnership working enables a multi-agency approach to help children achieve good outcomes.

The manager ensures that staff access specific training to enable them to meet the children's individual needs. All staff, except for one new starter, hold a relevant level 3 diploma. New staff benefit from a varied and in-depth induction and feel appropriately informed. However, some staff have not had refresher safeguarding training, which means that they may not have current safeguarding information.

The manager uses a range of monitoring tools to review the effectiveness of the service. However, the manager's six-monthly monitoring report is not analytical, has a limited action plan and does not include feedback from parents, professionals or children. Therefore, opportunities to identify strengths and weaknesses and make improvements to the service could be missed.

The manager has updated the home's statement of purpose to include staff changes. However, she has not sent an updated version to Ofsted.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home's updated statement of purpose is sent to Ofsted following any review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and ensure that safeguarding refresher training is completed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact that care is having on outcomes and improvements for children. The report should include feedback from parents, children and professionals. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: SC033120

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Luton Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU1 2BQ

Responsible individual: Allison Parkinson

Registered manager: Christine Ali

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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