

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 complex health needs and social and emotional needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2012.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

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: 3 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/09/2024	Full	Good
11/07/2023	Full	Good
06/04/2022	Full	Good
13/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Twenty-nine children access short breaks on a rotational basis. At the time of this inspection, there were 3 children at the home who spent time with the inspector.

A long standing and enthusiastic staff team support children. Relationships between children and staff are affectionate and warm. Staff are attuned to the children's individual needs. As a result, children, make progress from their starting points.

Staff help children to work towards simple, achievable independence targets. Staff encourage children to make choices about their care. Children work towards important targets to increase their independence and wellbeing.

Children are introduced to the home gradually. Staff meet children, parents, and teachers from the children's schools. Children and their families are supported to visit the home before children have overnight stays. Careful and thorough planning reduces children's anxieties about staying away from their family home.

Children have complex health and dietary needs. Staff receive training from nurses on specialist health care needs. They understand the importance of providing high-quality care to meet children's health needs.

Staff thoughtfully support children to communicate their wishes, through regular consultations. Some children have expressed the wish to make friends. Staff have made this opportunity available to them, organising opportunities for children to build positive relationships with one another. Regular consultations take place with children's family members and carers. Information provided is incorporated into children's plans. These approaches help to support children to feel listened to and valued.

Children take part in a range of activities, including visiting the theatre, parks, and cinema. Staff support children to take part in activities at the home and support the children's individual interests. Children thoroughly enjoy these fun and enriching experiences.

Children and families feel understood and find a sense of belonging at the home. One parent said, 'Staff dote on her, she loves it here and is so relaxed when she visits. If we need anything they [staff] support us, I feel so supported it is an amazing place'.

Staff speak of the children with warmth and care. However, their recordings are not consistently child centred. Staff use institutional words in children's records. This does not accurately reflect the warmth of the staffs' relationships with children.

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

Staff are well trained in effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities to safeguard the children and are aware of the children's additional vulnerabilities.

Children do not go missing from the home. Staffing levels are high, and children are constantly supervised due to their individual needs. Staff understand children's vulnerabilities and take effective action to keep them safe.

Risk assessments are detailed and provide staff with good guidance. Staff understand and implement risk assessments.

Managers and staff carefully plan to ensure that children are well matched as group when staying for a short break. This includes working closely with parents and professionals to build a good understanding of the children's needs. Staff regularly consult parents and use information provided to update children's plans. This approach has supported appropriate friendships between the groups of children who stay.

The home is spacious and vibrant with several communal areas and a large outdoor space for the children to enjoy. Purposeful communication boards support children's additional sensory needs. Children have access to books, games and toys for their enjoyment when visiting. This provides a stimulating environment that meets the children's needs and preferences.

On 4 occasions staff have used physical intervention to keep children safe. Physical intervention records are brief and lack the required details to clarify the use of intervention. Records do not demonstrate if children have been given necessary medical attention and emotional support after interventions have taken place. Reviews do take place by managers however, gaps in recording have not been identified.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home benefits from a long-standing manager who is experienced and qualified. She is an excellent role-model to staff and provides a high level of support. Staff speak highly of the manager's commitment and presence.

The manager and staff are an established team with many working at the home for a number of years. This provides consistency to the children who access the service. Newer staff members are supported to work through a thorough induction and have their practice reviewed regularly. This supports new staff to build the confidence and skills needed to work effectively with children.

Staff are supported by leaders and managers to reflect on their practice during supervision sessions and team meetings. Regular discussions take place about the children's needs. The strategies to support children are discussed and implemented by staff. This ensures the quality of care provided to children is continually improved.

Professionals and parents provided positive feedback about the manager and staff. They have no concerns about the quality of care provided to children. This reflects the strong relationships and good communication the home has built with external agencies and parents.

There is generally a good range of training to support staff with the skills they need to meet the children's individual needs. However, staff have not received refresher training in physical intervention and newer staff members have not yet received this training. Leaders and managers have arranged for this training to take place.

The manager holds staff wellbeing in high regard. Staff are supported to come to terms with child bereavement and discuss the impact that this has had on them. Thoughtful memorials take place and other children are supported by staff to remember friends and hold them in mind. Although the manager has responded to bereavement with sensitivity and compassion, she failed to notify Ofsted about this. As a result, Ofsted's capacity to monitor incidents of this nature has been reduced.

Most staff are qualified for their role or are working towards the relevant qualification. However, one member of staff is significantly out of timescale in achieving the relevant qualification. This prevents all staff from having the knowledge required to fulfil their role.

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 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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(1))	30 April 2026
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—	29 May 2026

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma") The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32(1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(b) (4)(a) (5)(a))	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii))	30 April 2026
If a child dies, the registered person must without delay notify— HMCI.(Regulation 40 (1)(a))	30 April 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that information about the child is always recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 address: Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, George Street,
LUTON LU1 2BQ

Responsible individual: Teresa Hills

Registered manager: Christine Ali

Inspector

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector

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