

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 and provides short breaks and respite for children with additional needs, complex health needs and/or challenging behaviour.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2012.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 April 2021

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: 2 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2019	Full	Good
06/02/2019	Full	Good
12/12/2017	Full	Good
10/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children have built trusting, positive relationships with a staff team that knows and understands their individual needs and their likes and dislikes. The children are greeted warmly by the staff on arrival for their short breaks. The staff pay attention to detail to welcome the children, putting out the children's favourite toys for when they arrive.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, children have been unable to attend activities in the community. The staff have ensured that there has been a wide variety of indoor and garden activities to keep children stimulated and occupied. As restrictions changed and in consultation with parents, some children, in line with local and government guidelines, have been able to visit local parks and shops.

Some children's complex health needs have meant that they have not been able to access their short breaks for some time. The staff have supported parents when children have experienced changes in their routines. The staff have made weekly welfare calls to parents and, when able, offered day care.

The manager and staff review children's short-break allocations on a weekly basis to ensure the best experience for children.

The staff gain children's views using the children's preferred communication styles. During the visit, the staff asked a child if she likes visiting the home. The child smiled, laughed and put her thumbs up. Both children who were visiting the home at the time of the inspection looked happy and relaxed and engaged well with staff.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the staff have needed to adapt how they manage children's transitions to short breaks. Although parents have been unable to accompany their child on the child's first tea visit, as they would have been able to do previously, parents have still felt supported. One parent said that the staff were very reassuring, and now her child is having overnight breaks and loves staying. The staff have skilfully adapted their approach to these transitions to make them successful and to ensure that children feel safe.

Staff spoke about the children with warmth and affection and were knowledgeable about each child's individual needs.

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

The staff do not use sanctions because, due to the children's cognitive ability, they would not be effective. Instead, the staff regularly praise children to reinforce positive behaviours. The staff use a reward chart for children when this is appropriate to the child's level of understanding. This has been particularly successful for one child and has led to a decrease in some unwanted behaviours.

Regularly reviewed, individualised and child-centred placement plans guide the staff effectively. Staff involve parents and, when appropriate, children in contributing to these plans. The nurse, along with staff and children's parents, completes the health plans for each child. Parents know that their children are cared for in a way that is familiar to them. These plans also guide the staff on keeping the children safe.

Comprehensive risk assessment are reviewed yearly or sooner if required. Parents are involved initially in writing the risk assessments and when the assessments are updated. This enables children's needs to be fully understood by the staff.

Staff understand that structures and routines are important for children to provide consistency during their stay. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and at the request of some parents, activities have been based in the home to keep children safe.

Staff have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training and have a good understanding of how to keep disabled children safe. Parents said that their children are safe and that the staff understand the children's individual risks and vulnerabilities.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Partnership working between the manager and professionals is effective. A social worker said that the staff have gone above and beyond in supporting a child and his family during the pandemic.

The manager works closely with the short-breaks nurse to ensure that children's complex health needs are managed well. The manager has begun to work with adult services to support the transition of children into adult care. This helps to ensure that the appropriate service is identified to meet the children's needs when they move on from their short breaks.

The staff have undertaken the organisation's mandatory training. They have also undertaken specialised training to ensure that they can meet the children's complex needs. Staff hold or are working towards a relevant level 3 qualification.

The staff said that their supervision helps them to reflect on their practice and gives them opportunities to discuss their personal development. This support enables the staff to work effectively with children.

The manager has met the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection.

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

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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