

SC052599

Registered provider: Milton Keynes City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides short breaks for up to 10 children with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 34 children were accessing the service for short breaks.

Four children were staying at the home during this inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2021.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 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: 5 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2025	Full	Good
18/04/2023	Full	Good
22/02/2023	Full	Inadequate
10/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make clear progress when staying at the home. They are supported by a caring, compassionate and well-trained staff who understand their needs and how to help them develop. Staff work effectively with other professionals to ensure that the targets children are working on in other settings are reinforced at the home. As a result, children are developing important skills in areas such as independence, confidence and social interaction.

Children enjoy staying at the home and benefit from the warm and welcoming atmosphere created by the staff. Staff have built positive and nurturing relationships with the children, which helps children to feel comfortable and valued. Children describe staff as 'nice' and say that staff listen to them. As a result, children are confident to approach staff and ask to spend time with them.

Staff demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the children and remain highly attuned to any changes in group dynamics. Their proactive oversight and responsive practice contribute to a calm, positive and well-managed short-break experience. As a result, children benefit from a nurturing environment in which they feel comfortable, settled and well supported.

Staff ensure that the children's complex needs are not a barrier to their experiences. Children enjoy a variety of activities in the home and out in the community. They have visited wildlife parks, gone on picnics and regularly go swimming, bowling and trampolining. When children request an activity, staff ensure this is actioned for their next visit.

Planning for children starting to use the service is consistently thorough and well considered. Staff invest meaningful time in getting to know each child before overnight stays begin, which ensures that individual needs and preferences are clearly understood. Children are carefully matched for each stay, resulting in groups whose needs and abilities are compatible. This approach enables children to spend time with familiar peers, supporting the development of friendships and promoting a sense of security and belonging.

Parents and professionals are consistently positive about the home. They describe the meaningful difference it makes to children and their families. Parents speak about the quality of care their children receive and the enjoyable experiences children have during their stays. Professionals emphasise that the service provides essential support to the families who access it. Together, their feedback reflects the positive affect the service has on children's lives and family wellbeing.

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

Staff have a thorough understanding of the children's complex needs and demonstrate confidence in providing the support required. Children's plans are clear, detailed and child centred, enabling staff to deliver consistent and effective care. These plans appropriately reflect each child's needs and guide staff in promoting children's safety and welfare.

Recruitment processes are very effective. Although there was a significant period when there were no new appointments due to a stable workforce, safe recruitment practice has been consistently maintained. Recent pre-employment checks identified a safeguarding concern relating to one applicant's previous role. As a result, the individual was not appointed. This demonstrates effective safeguarding practice and ensures that an unsuitable person is unable to provide care to highly vulnerable children.

Safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly by staff. Appropriate professionals are notified without delay, and staff follow the correct local guidance. Safeguarding processes in the home have been strengthened following learning from a recent safeguarding incident in another of the organisation's homes, which has enhanced staff knowledge and improved practice. However, on one occasion, the manager did not complete the record of an internal investigation into how a safeguarding incident occurred. This gap in recording limits the ability of other professionals to have full oversight of the circumstances of the incident and of the manager's evaluation of the events.

There have been few incidents involving physical intervention or chemical restraint. Staff complete records of incidents effectively providing clear rationale for decisions made during incidents. Staff support children appropriately and monitor them following these incidents. However, in post-incident discussions, managers do not fully explore with staff the specific measures used during the restraint. This limits managers' oversight of the interventions used and reduces opportunities for learning that could strengthen staff practice and improve future decision-making.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager maintains effective oversight of the home and uses effective monitoring and review systems to understand the quality of practice and daily operations. These systems support informed decision-making and ensure that high standards are upheld.

The manager has a deep understanding of the children's needs and has built positive and trusting relationships with them. She is regularly present in the home and spends meaningful time with the children. This enables her to have a clear understanding of children's experiences, views and individual circumstances.

The manager is an effective advocate for the children. She ensures the staff responds appropriately and promptly to children's needs. In one example, the manager arranged for the home to open over a weekend when it would usually be closed, so a child could have a short-term stay. The manager and deputy manager provided the care themselves

throughout this period. This proactive and child-centred decision ensured the child's care needs were met in a safe and suitable environment for their needs.

Staff speak passionately about their roles and express strong confidence in the leadership of the manager and in their colleagues. They describe the team as 'a family' and take pride in the contributions they make to the service. Team morale is high, and this is reflected in the effective and coordinated way staff work together to support the children. Staff benefit from regular supervision and annual appraisals support staff in their development.

The manager and staff have developed positive working relationships with families and external professionals. This supports effective multi-agency collaboration that is firmly focused on children's best interests. Staff work closely with the adults involved in each child's care to gather detailed information that informs their practice. As a result, the team is well equipped to tailor support and improve children's experiences when they stay at the home.

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— 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, the registered person must ensure that, in post-incident discussions with staff, measures used during physical and chemical restraints are fully explored. Additionally, the registered person must ensure that when investigating safeguarding concerns, the evidence supporting the manager's findings and conclusion is fully and clearly recorded.	20 April 2026

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: SC052599

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Milton Keynes City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Office, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ

Responsible individual: Victoria Courtis

Registered manager: Rosemarie Jefkins

Inspector

Louise Webling, Social Care Inspector

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