

SC391464

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire 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 or long-term stays for up to eight children with physical and/or learning disabilities.

The manager was appointed in August 2025 and has submitted an application for registration.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2025

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: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Good
27/02/2024	Full	Good
25/07/2022	Full	Good
27/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home under shared care arrangements, and eight children were accessing short breaks on a rotational basis. The inspector spent time with two children during the inspection.

Children are cared for by staff who know their needs very well. Staff are attuned to the children and offer individualised care. They develop warm relationships with children. Consequently, the children achieve stability and make progress in their emotional and social development. Parents highlight the positive impact that staff's support has had on their children's social and emotional development.

Staff know and use children's preferred methods of communication. Children participate in decisions about their daily lives. Staff consult children about what they want to wear and eat and which activities they would like to do. Three children are regularly visited by an advocate. This provides an opportunity for them to share their wishes and feelings with an independent person. Managers respond promptly to children's requests, and this helps children feel listened to and valued.

Children's short-break stays are sensitively planned and managed well. Managers and staff work closely with parents, teachers and social workers to understand children's needs better. Staff visit children in their family homes, and children also visit the home before their stay. This helps staff understand the child's needs and reduces anxiety for the child. Managers give thoughtful consideration to children's compatibility, ensuring that children who are friends are able to enjoy short breaks together. This helps to nurture friendships.

Staff provide children with consistent morning routines to support attendance at school. Consequently, all children have good attendance in school and are making progress with their education targets.

Staff help children make progress with their self-care and independence skills. Staff tailor the support to suit each child's developmental needs. As a result, children are making progress that is personal and significant for them.

Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the children's bedrooms to reflect their preferences and to the garden. However, children's shower rooms remain in poor condition with visible mould and some peeling paint.

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

Staff are nurturing and understand how to keep children safe. The children have trusted adults in the home. This helps them to feel safe.

Staff help children understand how to keep themselves safe and to develop an awareness of personal boundaries. For example, staff support children to explore topics such as puberty, growing up and socially acceptable behaviour. This helps children to understand and build healthier relationships.

Staff understand children's additional vulnerabilities and promptly share any concerns about children's safety and welfare. Staff share these concerns with managers, who review and explore the causes and share information with children's social workers. This multi-agency approach helps to keep children safe.

Staff understand the home's safeguarding and whistle-blowing policies and their safeguarding responsibilities. When concerns regarding staff practice emerge, staff share information promptly with managers, who in turn take appropriate action.

Staff know the children well and what may trigger children's distress. Staff use sensory strategies, such as water play and movement breaks, to help distract children who struggle to manage their emotions. Physical intervention is proportionately and appropriately used when needed. Managers speak to staff following incidents to try to explore lessons learned. However, managers do not always seek children's views. Furthermore, opportunities for children to express their views about the incident are not always facilitated by a person who was not involved in the incident.

On one occasion, leaders and managers delayed submitting a notification of a serious incident to Ofsted. This potentially undermines Ofsted's capacity to ensure that managers take appropriate actions to safeguard children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there have been significant leadership changes. The new manager has taken action to address most of the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. However, two requirements are restated.

Leaders and managers ensure there are sufficient staff to meet the children's needs. The home has a permanent and stable workforce and does not use agency staff. This means that children are cared for by consistent staff, which in turn helps children build their sense of trust and emotional security.

Managers respond swiftly and effectively when concerns about staff practice arise. They prioritise children's safety by promptly sharing relevant information with professionals and initiating investigations. Managers challenge poor practice through staff supervision and ensure that any learning is disseminated across the team. Targeted training is delivered to address any emerging issues, promoting continuous improvement in staff practice and safeguarding standards.

Leaders and managers have effective working relationships with professionals and parents and actively involve them in decision-making. Consequently, professionals and parents talk positively about the home.

Staff benefit from regular supervision, ensuring consistent oversight and reflection on practice. Staff receive further guidance on practice through team meetings, which are focused on children's needs and their welfare. Staff access training that is focused on the needs of disabled children. Most of the staff members have a relevant level 3 qualification. However, one staff member has passed the required time frame.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)(c)(i))	3 December 2025
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— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is—	30 January 2026

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; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	3 December 2025
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(c))	3 December 2025

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: SC391464

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

Registered provider address: Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ

Responsible individual: Thomas Smith

Registered manager: Michelle Henson

Inspector

Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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