

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC391503
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Central Bedfordshire Council
Registered person address	Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, SHEFFORD, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

Responsible individual	Kenneth Harvey
Registered manager	Joyce Hunnibell
Inspector	Jo Henderson

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Improved effectiveness. The manager continues to drive forward improvement; ensuring young people enjoy excellent short break stays. Staff remain highly motivated and are constantly striving to make an already excellent service even better. All young people make progress against identified and measurable targets, which are subject to regular review. Systems to record progress have significantly improved, with the addition of detailed summaries of each target as they are achieved or changed. This ensures young people and staff have clear information about what is going well, how it has happened and what needs further review. Staff work with carers to ensure that progress continues to be made in the young person's own home. Staff constantly look at ways of improving consultation with young people; they employ new and creative methods. Despite some young people having limited communication skills, staff are excellent at enabling and encouraging them to be heard and to contribute to decisions made about their care. A young person recently chaired and wrote the minutes of a house meeting. If young people show any interest in activities or particular resources, staff do their utmost to find a way to incorporate them into their stay. Parents and social workers say that staff at this home regularly go beyond what is expected of a short break service. One social worker said that the home's involvement, supporting a family in crisis in the community recently, offered an exceptional 'wraparound package'. She is clear that staff involvement significantly contributed to a better outcome for the young person and his family. Staff plan transitions meticulously, at a pace most suited to the young person. Staff willingly work over and above in order to ensure that beginnings or endings are positive and consistent. Young people's wellbeing remains the most important	

consideration at all times.

The manager encourages a culture of enquiry and staff are proactive in sourcing training and expert consultation in order to improve their understanding of young people. Recently, a member of staff arranged for a clinical psychologist, expert in an area of child mental health, to address the team meeting. She took the initiative at a professionals meeting to tap into an area of expertise to improve staff knowledge and understanding. Regular reflective practice meetings, focusing on individual young people, are well attended by staff and colleagues from other services.

Staff invite parents and carers to coffee mornings, in order that they too can contribute to the development of the service. These meetings have provided a forum for carers of young people to share information and offer support to one another.

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities, both in the home and out in the wider community. Since the last inspection they have been to a safari park, theme parks, the theatre and ice skating. Staff are happy to take managed risks with young people to ensure they are able to access as many opportunities as possible. The manager encourages staff and young people to push the limits of what they are able to achieve, regardless of disability. Recently, a young person, in an exercise about hopes and dreams, said that she wanted to work in a café. Already the manager is planning how this might be arranged. Young people using this service are enabled to aspire and achieve, significantly improving their confidence and positively impacting on their self-esteem.

There have been no incidents of young people going missing from care since the last inspection. Young people do not try to leave and a high staffing ratio is in place at all times, ensuring that this is not an issue. Similarly, there have been no occasions warranting physical intervention. Some young people present challenging behaviours but staff are skilled and successfully use de-escalation techniques. Even when a young person recently had a period of very unsettled behaviour, staff were able to work sensitively with him whilst ensuring others were safeguarded.

There have been three complaints, which have been responded to in a timely and thorough way. One was from a young person around an aspect of her care. The manager and staff took her views very seriously, meetings were held involving her and she received a full written response to the issues raised. A parent who made a complaint said in an email: 'I think your staff are wonderful and your manager is exceptional and I have no doubt that you take everything seriously. Whenever I have had any concerns you have always got back to me with a perfect solution.'

Staff know young people extremely well and are passionate about offering them the best possible short break stays. They remain focused on young people and are highly motivated to continue to improve and enhance the already excellent service they offer. Parents and multi-agency colleagues consistently praise the level of commitment and expertise demonstrated and consider this home to be a model of good practice.

Information about this children's home

This service is registered to provide short breaks for up to four children or young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
10/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/11/2014	Full	Good
25/02/2014	Interim	Good progress

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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