

SC391503

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by the local authority, provides short breaks or long stays for up to four children with physical and/or learning disabilities.

There has been no registered manager since October 2022. A new manager is in post and is applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/07/2021	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Full	Good
26/09/2018	Full	Good
21/06/2017	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of inspection, 22 children were accessing the home for short-break stays on a rotational basis. There were two children having an overnight stay at the time of this inspection.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Staff were observed to be caring and genuinely interested in the children. Staff encourage children to choose their activities by using visual prompts. Children enjoy spending time with staff, who show them love and affection.

Parents gave excellent feedback about the care that their children receive and about the manager and staff. One parent said that her child's communication skills have improved because the staff encourage him to regularly use an appropriate method of communication. She said that the staff are 'like an extended family'. Parents feel assured that their children are well cared for and are helped to develop important communication skills.

Children take part in a good range of enjoyable and enriching activities. They go swimming and trampolining and enjoy time at the local parks. Staff put photos of children's experiences in booklets for the children to take home. Children have fun when they stay at the home, and memories of their time are captured.

Children are encouraged to be part of the local community. One child has visited a local ambulance station. Some of the children have been collecting food items to donate to a local food bank. The children make positive contributions to the local community.

Staff find creative ways to encourage children with complex communication needs to express their views and feelings. Staff understand the importance of children feeling heard and understood. Children feel listened to and valued.

Children's moves in and out of the home are gradual and well planned. One child who moved on from the home got to know the staff at his new home before he moved on. The manager and staff remain in contact with the child and have visited him. The manager is planning to take some of the child's friends from the home to visit him soon. The children stay in touch with people who are important to them.

The home is welcoming, spacious and well decorated. There are photos of the children displayed around the home. A new kitchen has recently been installed. Children's bedrooms meet a range of different needs. However, the entrance to the home has some weeds and leaves on the path. The back garden has a lot of leaves on the grass, which detracts from an otherwise homely environment.

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

There have been no episodes of children going missing from the home. Staff have appropriate training in safeguarding children with disabilities. The staff understand safeguarding procedures.

There have been several low-level physical interventions. The physical interventions have been appropriate and necessary. The manager ensures that staff are debriefed following incidents. Children are encouraged and helped to express how they feel. One child did some work around kindness following a physical intervention. The work was meaningful and helped the child to make sense of the physical intervention.

Children's behaviour support plans are detailed and consider the individual needs of each child. Children's communication plans are helpful and enable staff to engage children in a way that children want to be helped.

Risk assessments and matching assessments are generally well detailed. However, one child's risk assessment does not detail steps that would be taken should the child go missing from the home. Children's impact risk assessments do not detail how matching decisions are made. Not having clear processes for staff could be confusing. Lack of evidence of rationale for matching decisions makes it difficult to know how matching is fully assessed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The experienced manager holds a relevant level 5 qualification. She was previously the deputy manager of the home for several years. She has had a thorough handover period from the registered manager. The new manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted. Children have had consistency of care because of the managers' well-considered planning.

Staff have regular supervision sessions and feel well supported by managers. Staff said that the managers are approachable and have an open-door policy. The staff team is stable and consistent and morale is high. Staff are motivated to deliver excellent care.

Staff have bespoke training to meet the complex needs of the children. Most of the staff have a relevant level 3 diploma. Some staff are working towards the qualification within agreed time frames. The staff benefit from regular team meetings. They have taken part in a team-building day. Staff understand how to meet the children's needs and have regular input and guidance on how to provide individualised care for children.

There have been some medication errors. Managers have taken appropriate action. The home's medication policy has been updated and staff are observed by managers to assess their competency. The manager has ensured that the staff involved in the

errors have had additional medication training. Being responsive has meant that there have been no further medication errors.

The independent person's reports are of good quality and make appropriate recommendations. These help the manager to make continuous improvements to the quality of care that children receive.

The manager's review of care is detailed. The report includes feedback from professionals and parents. However, actions from the previous report are not measured for progress. It is not clear what impact the actions taken have had on the quality of care.

The manager follows safer recruitment practices. However, some staff recruitment information is not held at the home. There are no clear records of staff's references or reference verification records. Not having this information makes it unclear how the manager is monitoring recruitment records.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children. The front and back of the property should be free from leaves and weeds and be well maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements to protect them. In particular, ensure that impact risk assessments include the rationale for matching decisions regarding children's stays and that risk assessments include steps to take if children were to go missing from the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that recruitment records are clear and accessible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the actions in the manager's review of the quality of the care provided by the home are measured for progress and impact. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.2)

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: SC391503

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

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

Responsible individual: Joy Piper

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector
Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022