

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.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2009.

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: 6 to 7 July 2021

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	outstanding

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

Date of last inspection: 18 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/12/2019	Full	Good
26/09/2018	Full	Good
21/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
04/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress and flourish during their long stays or short breaks. Staff are dedicated to providing nurturing care that celebrates each child's individual personality and needs. Children develop good trusting relationships with staff because of the quality one-to-one work that staff do with them.

Staff work very well with families and external professionals to ensure that each child's communication needs and abilities are understood and to enable progress. A social worker for a child who recently left after a long stay said, 'The child received fantastic care received from the home. He made a lot of progress. The staff have set him up for life. He even left being able to make a cup of tea, which is a huge achievement for a visually impaired young person.'

All the children have a child-centred placement plan. These are written with the children to ensure that their opinions are known and provide staff with a clear guide to their likes and needs. The plans are regularly updated to ensure that staff continue to work effectively with the children's changing needs.

The staff understand that children progress through experiences. Children are encouraged to take part in new activities. They enjoy messy play, baking and trips out to parks. Staff celebrate these fun achievements by taking photographs and video recordings. Photographs are displayed at the home and shared with parents. The videos are shown at each child's review.

Transitions are extremely well planned. The children are given time to familiarise themselves with the staff and other children prior to commencing overnight stays. Parents visit with their children and feel fully involved in the process. Recently, a child who had lived long term at the home received a lovely celebration party to commemorate his time there. The managers and staff ensure that the children receive good beginnings and endings to their time at the home.

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

Children are supervised to a high level by staff who know them well. Parents said that their children are safe and happy during their stays. A parent said about their child, 'When he is at the home, it is the only time that I can relax. I know that he is 100% safe there. The staff have given so much support. They are amazing.'

Detailed risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly. These assessments identify any changes in behaviour that may alter the measures required to manage new risks. This continued good practice results in staff being provided with the knowledge of how to manage risks effectively for each child.

Staff are skilled at de-escalating situations and physical intervention is rarely used. When intervention is necessary, staff are quick to respond to prevent injury.

Managers review the effectiveness of actions taken and provide staff with guidance to reduce the likelihood of further incidents. A previous recommendation set has been met. The children's different communication needs and styles are now very much considered. Their opinions and views are fully recorded following any incident.

Children do not go missing from the home. Many of the children have no understanding of danger and staff monitor their movements to ensure their safety. Managers ensure that they have the correct staffing levels to adequately meet each child's needs.

All staff have received safeguarding training; this includes training specific to children with disabilities. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow and recognise that they have a duty to safeguard children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is dynamic and inspirational in her style of leadership. She is highly experienced, long serving and suitably qualified. She is well supported by two deputy managers. Together, they ensure that meeting children's needs is paramount throughout the care provided.

The dedicated staff team remains consistent, with only one staff member leaving since the last inspection. Staff have an in-depth understanding of each child who regularly stays and take great pride in providing positive and fun experiences. The children benefit greatly from a stable staff team that is attuned to their individual needs.

Staff attend fortnightly team meetings, receive monthly good-quality supervision and have yearly appraisals. Staff said that they feel valued and inspired and appreciate the manager's open-door policy. The manager allocates time in meetings and supervision to discuss children's individual needs and any new behaviours. By working together as an organised and motivated team, the manager and staff ensure that consistent child-focused practice is maintained.

The manager invests time in ensuring that the very positive and effective relationships with professionals continue. The manager and the staff share any new information promptly. Professionals welcome the proactive approach to communication. A social worker said, 'This is a fantastic provision. Communication is always really good.' An education professional said, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the home. The staff go over and above [expectations].'

The home is well resourced to meet children's individual needs. If a child requires extra support, the manager seeks to provide this. For example, staff encouraged and helped a child to learn Braille by learning this new skill themselves alongside the child. This made it a fun interactive experience and enabled the child to grow in confidence, especially when he was often and openly praised for learning a new letter, sometimes more quickly than staff.

The manager recognises the home's strengths and weaknesses and is innovative in her practice. A great strength of the home is the outside activities provided to children. The COVID-19 pandemic naturally affected these opportunities. Managers took the initiative and a creative solution was implemented. Litter-picking tools were purchased and during the lockdown period the children thoroughly enjoyed using this equipment with staff in their outside exercise time. This ensured that the children were still able to experience being very much part of the local community.

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: Joyce Hunnibell

Inspector

Lynne Drage, 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 2021