

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	16/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC391503
Type of inspection	Full
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	16/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC391503

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The home provides an extremely attractive, comfortable and welcoming environment for young people to enjoy short term respite stays.
- The home is very well equipped with high quality interactive and sensory play equipment designed to stimulate and enable young people.
- A highly skilled, experienced and consistent staff group provide warm and nurturing care.
- Young people have individual targets to aim towards and progress is well documented, providing evidence of change.
- Staff encourage and enable young people to make progress that is significant for them.
- Staff consult young people in a variety of creative ways about the service they receive and take account of their views.
- Staff have developed extremely robust systems to ensure that medication is administered safely at all times.
- Despite young people's complex needs, incidents of negative behaviour are few. Staff are able to de-escalate potentially difficult situations successfully and consistently.
- The registered manager leads by example in consistently demonstrating commitment to offering young people the best possible experience of short break respite care.
- Staff are clear that young people should have aspirational targets to work towards and are instrumental in enabling this to happen.
- Staff are able to demonstrate that young people's needs are at the centre of all decisions made and are confident to challenge where this is not the case.
- There are efficient and effective systems in place, ensuring that good quality staff are appointed, trained and retained

Full report

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
10/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/11/2014	Full	Good
25/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
22/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people have highly individualised care plans, which contain all information relevant to them. Files are clear, easily accessible and up to date. Each young person has agreed targets and staff regularly record information to evidence progress. The system in place is simple but innovative and demonstrates that staff are aspirational for young people to develop and move forward. If progress is not being made, staff are creative at exploring other ways to help young people affect change. The home is bright, attractive and decorated and maintained to an exceptionally high standard. Young people have access to a wide range of good quality interactive and sensory toys and aids, which they enjoy regularly. Staff personalise the bedrooms for each young person staying so that they feel comfortable and at home. Young people enjoy their stays and one said that it was like 'a children's hotel'. A consistent and skilled workforce offer the young people a high level of warm, nurturing care. Young people are happy and relaxed in their company and in turn staff speak of them with affection and pride. Every achievement and positive aspect is noted. Staff praise and reward young people accordingly, in a way that they understand and value. Staff know the young people well and as such are able to provide the best possible care. Parents of two young people said separately that they are confident staff know their children 'inside and out'. Staff regularly use creative and innovative ways to enable young people, who may have communication difficulties, to have their voices heard. Staff have designed pictorial questionnaires to elicit their wishes and feelings. There is also a bright and attractive young person's guide to the home in pictorial form. Young people are given the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities that otherwise may prove difficult for them. One parent described how staff persisted with encouraging and enabling her son to take part in community activities such as the cinema and bowling. She said: 'He has achieved things I would never have thought possible.' Staff can evidence the variety of activities and outings undertaken through photographs of young people and follow up key work sessions. Some young people have complex health needs, which staff manage very competently. There is an extremely robust procedure in place to ensure that staff	

administer medication safely with a number of secondary checks in place. Staff are well trained in relevant medical procedures and this is updated on a regular basis. Parents confirm that they are confident and reassured that their children are safely cared for.

All young people attend an appropriate educational provision, which for most is on the same site as the home. Staff work closely with education colleagues to ensure consistency in managing care and behaviour. Parents and social workers particularly value this holistic model of practice.

Staff work hard to manage transitions well for young people. Introductions to the home are undertaken at a pace consistent with the young person's wishes and level of understanding. This ensures that young people only access the service when they feel ready to do so. Staff are able to evidence exceptional practice in relation to young people moving on from the service. One young person expressed a wish to have a work placement which, with considerable effort, staff facilitated for him. As a direct result and with their support he went on to secure a job in the community, which was a huge achievement.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Each young person has a set of individual risk assessments, which cover all areas of concern specific to them. Staff identify triggers and signs and suggest strategies to reduce risk. Staff know the young people very well and ensure that consideration goes into managing every environment safely and appropriately. The building is well maintained and all appropriate health and safety checks are undertaken diligently and to a high standard by a designated staff member. Young people do not go missing from this home due to the high level of supervision and care offered. Staff do, however, understand the processes and procedures involved should this happen. Similarly, staff are aware of the particular vulnerability of some groups of young people to child sexual exploitation and the risk this may pose to those accessing the service. Staff have very recently had the benefit of expert professional input in relation to both of these areas at a recent staff meeting. Incidents of negative behaviour are few. Staff know the young people very well and plan stays and activities carefully, taking into consideration the environment and group dynamic. Most behaviour is managed by ignoring low level disruption, encouraging positive behaviour and de-escalation and using diversion if	

appropriate. Young people respond positively to the consistency offered and as such there are few occasions when staff need to respond more strongly. There are no sanctions or incidents of physical restraint. Staff are trained to safely restrain young people, should this be required.

Care is taken to employ staff of high calibre and relevant experience. Recruitment procedures and checks are robust, ensuring appropriate appointments that adhere to safer recruitment procedures at all times.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager, who has been in post since 2008, leads this home by example. She has a level qualification relevant to working with young people. She is organised, effective and totally focused on improving the experience of young people who access this short break service. Furthermore, she and the staff group are committed to ensuring that young people have every opportunity to make progress to enhance their quality of life. An experienced and able deputy manager, who shares her passion and commitment to working towards better outcomes for young people, supports her. The ethos of this home is that first and foremost, the well-being of young people is central to all decisions made at all times. The staff and manager are proactive in advocating on behalf of young people and confident to challenge when responses from other services are not effective. Staff are able to provide examples of when this has made a significant difference for young people. Staff enable young people to progress at a pace commensurate with their abilities and celebrate all achievements, however small. Staff and managers proactively share this information with parents and multi-agency colleagues as a matter of course. All staff regularly receive high quality supervision that is both practical and reflective, from a suitably qualified and experienced professional. Managers offer positive feedback where professional practice is of a high quality and challenge where improvement is required. All young people's files contain evidence of robust management oversight conducted on a regular basis. Professional relationships with parents and multi-agency colleagues are well established and of a high standard. Parents speak highly of the staff and service offered. One parent described the respite service as 'a lifeboat on our journey'. The close working relationships with other multi-agency colleagues enables the service	

offered to young people to be holistic and joined up. Parents and social workers also appreciate their adaptability. One social worker said: 'They always try to work flexibly with a family's needs and fit around them. They really do support the whole family wherever possible.'

The manager has recently updated the statement of purpose and the home consistently achieves the aims and objectives stated. Similarly, staff both understand and show commitment to ensuring they deliver accordingly.

Despite the exceptionally high standards regularly achieved in this home, neither the registered manager nor the staff are complacent. There is evidence that they are constantly striving to improve the quality of the service offered. Staff bring good practice to regular team meetings for wider dissemination and the manager has ambitious development plans to improve the service offered.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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