

SC391503

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 four children with physical and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 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: 21 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2023	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
06/07/2021	Full	Good
18/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, 15 children were accessing respite care on a rotational basis, and one child was living at the home. Five children contributed to the inspection. Children have fulfilling experiences that are supported by the established and committed staff team.

Staff provide good-quality individualised care to meet children's needs. The relationships between staff and children are strong. Staff act as positive role models. They respond to children with respect and warmth. This gives children a sense of stability, which supports their emotional and social development.

Children's short breaks or long-term care are managed well. Managers and staff work closely with parents and social workers to build an understanding of children's needs. Children receive personalised introductions that are based on their preferences. Detailed compatibility assessments support safer friendships between the children who stay.

Staff help children with their education and learning. Staff maintain consistent and familiar routines to support children's good school attendance. Staff maintain effective levels of communication with school staff to ensure any gaps in children's learning are reduced.

Children make good progress with their independence and self-care skills. Staff help the children to develop these skills through individualised approaches that are tailored to children's developmental stages. This ensures children make progress that is significant for them.

Staff work closely with health professionals to meet children's complex health needs. One child has significantly improved their overall health because of the support that has been provided by staff.

Children enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. Recent outings to trampoline parks, leisure centres and the cinema meet children's interests. Children have participated in charity events. This varied range of experiences improves children's sense of community and well-being.

Staff regularly review placement plans. Children's health, daily routines and preferences are well considered. However, for some children, guidance for staff around developing children's communication skills is limited. The lack of informed guidance means that these children make variable progress in this area.

The home is well equipped to meet children's recreational and leisure interests. Themed bedrooms are creative and reflect children's preferences. Individual spaces meet children's sensory needs. However, a notice board in the dining room contains personal

information about children's care. This is visible to other children and visitors and therefore does not protect children's privacy.

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

Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have good knowledge of children's additional vulnerabilities. The staff understand the whistle-blowing procedures. When safeguarding concerns have emerged, managers have addressed these effectively.

Staff compile detailed risk assessments for children. These are followed by staff and consider children's individual needs and abilities. These ensure that all children can navigate new experiences which are safe and positive.

Staff use proactive behaviour management strategies to successfully reduce situations that can increase children's anxiety. Staff generally manage incidents without the need for physical intervention. When staff use physical restraint, it is proportionate. Managers ensure that individual incidents are reviewed, and learning is identified when needed.

Staff provide familiar and consistent routines that help children to feel secure. Parents have trust in the staff and are confident that staff advocate for children's best interests, safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and qualified. She has strong child-centred values and effectively leads a culture of high aspiration for children. This positive culture is reflected by the staff's practice. Three deputy managers support the manager.

Staff value the wide range of support that managers provide. There are high staff retention levels at the home which have provided good continuity of care to children. Staff receive regular supervision sessions, annual appraisals and attend well-planned team meetings. This ensures a unified approach to children's care.

The manager has good oversight of the support provided to children. Internal management monitoring and review systems are comprehensive. Records are clear and improvement areas are promptly identified and actioned.

Social workers and educational professionals provided positive feedback about the effectiveness of collaborative working with staff and managers. Managers ensure there is a proactive partnership with parents who described children's support and experiences as 'fantastic'.

Staff take advantage of a range of training to meet the individual needs of children. Staff are trained in delegated health tasks. However, important training in supporting alternative communication systems for children has not been provided for staff. This is despite a high number of children requiring the use of communication aids to express

their views. In addition, some of the staff have not attended sensory integration awareness training.

Generally, managers and staff advocate well for children. However, one child's behaviour support plan is out of date and needs to be reviewed by the specialist behaviour team in the local authority. The manager has requested this review on several occasions but has not escalated the delay.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should as far as possible maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression at the home. In particular, ensure that children's confidential information about their care is kept private. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children's plans provide detailed guidance for staff in how to develop and support children's individual communication skills. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- The registered person should escalate concerns when there is a delay in response and action from specialist behaviour support professionals. This is regarding the review of one child's behaviour support plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff are offered training around alternative communication methods and sensory integration approaches with children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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

Responsible individual: Post Vacant

Registered manager: Rebecca Perry

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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