

SC391503

Registered provider: Central Bedfordshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority runs this service which provides short breaks or long stays for up to four children who may have physical and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 September 2018

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: 21 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/06/2017	Full	Outstanding
04/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/08/2016	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that the individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)
In particular, ensure that the assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is recorded in the monthly report.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home continues to make a significantly positive difference to the lives of children and their families; children thrive. Carefully planned admissions and significant help to facilitate daily transitions ensure that the children have good experiences and fun during their stay.

Very recent changes to the conditions of registration demonstrate how willing the registered manager and responsible individual are to be flexible and to make child-centred decisions when changes in family circumstances occur.

Children make excellent progress in developing their skills in communication and independence. A sensory approach to meeting the holistic needs of every individual child ensures that all children are encouraged to fulfil their potential. Children are encouraged to exercise personal choice whenever circumstances allow this to be possible. This ethos invites children to safely explore their world.

This service is particularly welcoming and homely. There are plenty of toys, arts, crafts and play equipment readily available for the children to express their individuality. A colourful sensory garden, generous space and outdoor equipment entice children outside. Staff have good knowledge of the local area, and ready access to transport ensures that children can visit local and national attractions. These experiences promote learning and the children's inclusion in their community.

Attention to detail means that children's bedrooms are personalised for their stay. Waking-night staff and specialist beds and equipment ensure that children are comfortable and have a good, restful sleep.

Individualised support plans and 'all about me' booklets help to ensure that staff understand and are responsive to the unique and individual sensory and personal care needs of each child.

Children's school attendance improves. The home has excellent relationships with local and specialist services, which in turn ensure that the children experience continuity with their unique and respective healthcare needs.

Without exception, all parents represented in this inspection spoke positively about the support and help that they and their child receive. Parents and carers feel included in their child's support plan and recognise the significant difference that the service makes for the family unit.

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

Children are safe. The staff and the children build nurturing and trusting relationships. The staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding.

The staff's regular and meaningful communication with parents ensures that any matters of concern are identified and acted on immediately. The staff have highly effective working relationships with a range of professionals, thus providing another layer of safety for the children.

Children do not go missing. In the unlikely event of this happening, staff are clear about the action to take to ensure a coordinated and robust response.

Physical restraint is unusual. If used, the reason for the intervention is clearly recorded, which allows managers to have meaningful input and maintain effective oversight of practice. Records show that interventions are brief and used to keep children safe from causing further harm to themselves or others.

Staff value the children's contributions. Staff do not use sanctions. A high-praise low-criticism approach to behaviour management ensures that children are encouraged to do their best in any given situation. This fosters a culture of respect and positive regard.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is extremely experienced and respected by the staff, the children and their families. The inspirational manager continues to deliver highly effective and personalised services. Supported by knowledgeable and competent long-standing deputy managers, the leadership team continues to seek new and aspirational ways to improve this highly effective service.

The managers are highly visible and proactive. They help the staff to plan and to anticipate risk.

Regular community events and open days help the leadership team to maintain an open dialogue with children's families and their social workers. These opportunities ensure that any issues are quickly identified, and that action is taken to circumvent problems.

The long-serving staff team continues to receive high-quality supervision and support

designed to encourage reflection and build professional competence. One member of support staff has achieved a relevant level 5 qualification. Group supervisions with local authority social workers and practice workshops in team meetings help to raise standards and ensure that staff stay mindful of children's progress and experiences.

The arrangements for staff training and development are clear and effective. Managers take decisive and structured action to address any shortfalls in practice. Internal quality assurance processes help to identify weaknesses and provide a platform for the managers to introduce improvements.

External quality assurance provides a consistent overview of the arrangements for promoting the welfare of children. Specific comment in the independent visitor's report is necessary to clarify the visitor's assessment of the effectiveness of the home's arrangements for safeguarding. This shortfall has no impact on children.

Several staff who provide residential support are also involved in providing community services. This means that many staff see children in their home and community. This enables staff and managers to understand the child's whole social experience and enables the residential experience to be shaped exceptionally efficiently to meet individual need.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, SHEFFORD, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Responsible individual: Kenneth Harvey

Registered manager: Joyce Hunnibell

Inspector

Rosie Davie: social care inspector

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