

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 4 children with physical and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2022.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 January 2026

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: 25 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2025	Full	Good
21/11/2023	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
06/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home. Fourteen children were accessing short breaks on a rotational basis. Four children contributed to this inspection.

Children have fulfilling experiences, supported by an established and committed staff team. Leaders and managers ensure that children's stays are carefully planned. They sensitively consider children's needs, friendships, impact on other children and staffing when organising which children come to stay together. The needs of the child who lives in the home long term are prioritised so that disruption to them of different children coming to stay is minimised. Staff nurture positive friendships by carefully planning stays for children with similar interests. One child said they enjoy playing with their friends and has a named best friend from this home.

Staff support children to enjoy experiences that may not be available to them otherwise. They provide children with a wide array of activities such as bowling, swimming, trips to attractions and local walks to the park and library. Staff keep memory books for children of these activities. This helps children reflect on memorable moments and enhances their self-esteem.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff who have worked at the home for a long time and therefore know them well. Staff develop positive relationships with children. Consequently, children develop warm bonds with staff and other children. This helps children to share their views and emotions and promotes a sense of belonging and stability.

Staff are attuned to children's communication strategies. They know each child's preferred method of communication. Staff consult children on various issues about the home, such as food and activity choices, and seek children's views about their stay. Staff and managers quickly action children's requests. The child who lives at the home is regularly visited by their advocate and their views are considered in statutory review meetings. This helps the child feel listened to and valued.

Staff support children to attend school. Staff help them to manage the upsetting feelings that come with transitions between home and school. They maintain effective communication with schools. Staff encourage children to learn new skills and make progress. Staff set individualised targets for children that are regularly reviewed. The children are individually making progress with independence skills such as learning to cook and do laundry and in personal care. Staff document and celebrate these achievements, which enhances children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff work effectively with health professionals. This is particularly relevant for one child with complex health needs. The child's social worker said, 'This child's condition is well managed, and they are now communicating more with expressions and vocalisation.'

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

Staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities of children in their care and provide individualised support to meet the children's needs. Staff use a strengths-based approach in their care and interactions with the children. Positive relationships develop between staff and children in which children appear to feel safe and secure. Children are able to name adults they trust. They feel comfortable telling them if they are worried.

Children receive help and support to manage their feelings and behaviour safely. Staff understand children's experiences and behaviour as a means of communication. They respond with appropriate boundaries about what is safe and acceptable for each child. Staff understand the triggers for children's behaviour and avoid these when possible, and support distressed children to calm down. As a result, staff have not used physical restraint since the last inspection.

Staff have conversations with children about how to keep themselves safe, including in relation to issues such as fire safety, road safety and socially acceptable behaviour. Children are making progress from their starting points. For example, one child is developing an awareness of respecting another child's personal space.

On the one occasion when a child made an allegation against staff, the manager acted quickly and appropriately to ensure the child's immediate safety. They completed fact-finding and shared information with the school. However, the manager did not share information with other professionals such as the child's social worker, local authority designated officer and Ofsted. This means these safeguarding partners were unable to fulfil their roles and responsibilities or provide external oversight.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The suitably experienced and qualified manager is supported by 2 deputy managers. They lead as a team, with confidence. They are ambitious and have high aspirations for the children to reach their potential. This is reflected in the individualised strengths-based care for children.

The home is sufficiently staffed. Children are supported by permanent and longstanding staff. Managers retain staff and the home does not use agency staff. This offers children consistency and a chance to develop positive relationships, which helps them to build emotional security.

Staff say morale is positive and they feel well supported. Managers support staff through routine individual supervisions and team meetings. Team meetings are focused on staff wellbeing and children's needs. This includes monitoring and evaluating children's

progress against set targets. This approach helps staff to focus on meeting children's needs.

Leaders and managers work effectively with other professionals and parents. Feedback from parents and professionals is unanimously positive. The manager involves health professionals in training staff to better meet children's complex health needs. As a result, staff recognised one child's indicators of poor health and responded quickly to ensure the child's wellbeing.

Staff complete the organisation's core training offer and specific training that enables them to meet children's needs. Most of the staff members have a relevant level 3 qualification and some are working towards the qualification. However, one staff member has not completed medication refresher training within the set timescale.

The manager has effective monitoring systems in place to ensure the children receive good-quality care and support. The recommendations set at the last inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action to be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. In particular, ensure that staff complete medication training within the specified time frame. ('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: Central Bedfordshire Council

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

Responsible individual: Thomas Smith

Registered manager: Rebecca Perry

Inspector

Priscilla Koroka, Social Care Inspector

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