

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC409502
Inspector	Rosemary Dancer
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Bedford Borough Council
Registered person address	Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall Cauldwell Street BEDFORD MK42 9AP
Responsible individual	Tara Geere
Registered manager	Joyce Margaret Ward
Date of last inspection	19/09/2014

Inspection date	13/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

There were three recommendations made following the last inspection. Two of these had been addressed. The first related to gaps in staff's employment histories; these have now been satisfactorily explored. The second related to ensuring staff received supervision at the stated frequency; staff are now receiving supervision at an appropriate frequency. The third recommendation related to ensuring that information from placing social workers is gained in a timely way. While there has been some progress in meeting this, some information remains outstanding and this means that the internal care planning, for some young people, may not be up to date.

Staff have not, in every case, followed documented risk assessments relating to young people's health needs. Additionally, they have not always informed parents that their child is unwell in a timely way. At the time of the inspection these shortfalls had not been picked up through the monitoring processes and therefore any concerns about specific incidents had not been identified or investigated. The recording made when young people are unwell are insufficient. For example, they do not contain enough detail for the reader to gain a comprehensive view about what occurred or what decisions were made about whether or not to seek medical advice.

Young people enjoy a range of planned activities, of their choosing. This helps to stimulate them, provide them with exercise and allow them to have fun. For example, they have adopted animals at the local zoo and follow their progress with interest, they go swimming and take part in many other activities outside and inside the home.

Young people's wishes and feelings are seen as important and are acted upon. These are gained through a range of means that include monthly young people's meetings, the use of a suggestion box and through an advocate who visits to meet

with the young people on a monthly basis. The home is also introducing a self-advocacy tool that young people will be able to use to express their views. A positive development is a 'communication tool box' which has a range of resources to help young people to express their wishes and feelings. Young people's attendance at reviews is well supported so that they can feed their wishes and feelings into the planning for them. Useful pictorial and widget booklets have been developed that ensure they are well informed about what the home can provide them and what to expect from their stays in the home.

Young people make progress in many areas of their lives. For example, there have been improvements, for some, in their vocabulary and sentence structure, and for others, an increase in their levels of independence, through the use of equipment supplied by the home. This impacts positively on their self-esteem and confidence.

Young people are happy to have stays in the home; they are clearly at ease with the staff and enjoy their time with them. They build and maintain friendships with other young people who stay there and this helps them to make and maintain friendships and develop their social skills.

Young people learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff work with them to increase their understanding about who is and who may not be a safe person and support them in understanding about the fire evacuation procedure so they understand how to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to five children with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and sensory impairment. Three children can be accommodated under short break arrangements, one young person can be accommodated as a permanent placement and one young person can be accommodated under a shared care arrangement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/09/2014	Full	good
23/01/2014	Interim	good progress
23/05/2013	Full	good
03/01/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
20 (2001)	promote and protect the physical, emotional and mental health of the children accommodated (Regulation 20 (1))	13/04/2015
20 (2001)	ensure each child has access to such medical, dental, nursing, psychological and psychiatric advice, treatment and other services as he may require (Regulation 20 (2) (b))	13/04/2015
28 (2001)	maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in the children's home in a permanent form the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child. (Regulation 28 (1) (a))	13/04/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on each child's file; with specific reference to continuing to request the information from the responsible social work department. (NMS 25.8)
- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. (NMS 21.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.