

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC409506
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	Mr Darryl Freeman
Registered manager	Mrs Jayne Almond
Inspector	Miss Angie Bishop

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged Adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The manager has registered with Ofsted since the last inspection. She has a good understanding of the provision and clearly identifies areas of strength and improvement. Staff, professionals and family members are positive about the progress young people make under the supervision of the new manager. A social worker said, 'things have improved and the new manager coming in has helped.'</p> <p>The manager has addressed the three requirements and five of the seven recommendations made at the full inspection. She routinely seeks feedback from young people, family members and professionals and uses this to monitor and inform areas for improvement. Staff, family members and professionals also contribute to dynamic risk assessments for each of the 20 young people who access this provision and all young people now have an updated personal evacuation plan. Staff now record clearly and concisely in respect of physical interventions in the home, ensuring that these documents are comprehensive.</p> <p>The two unmet recommendations translate into a new requirement and recommendation following this inspection. Staff training continues to require a review as currently staff describe being limited by a centrally devised training programme. As a result, training is not always relevant to the setting and staff development needs are not consistently met. Young people do not currently go missing from this home. However, staff do not have access to a missing from care policy specific to this short break provision and they use the local authority policy for young people who go missing from care; this has an impact on the effectiveness of staff responses should any young person leave the provision unsupervised. The manager has action plans to progress these but they are yet to become effective.</p> <p>Three new shortfalls have been identified during this inspection. The manager and staff are beginning to utilise new recording methods; where these are in use, they enable staff to focus on the clarity of their recording. Some young people's files have not been updated and continue to lack clear information; this recording will impede the ability of new staff to understand a young person's circumstances.</p>	

During some stays, some young people currently experience a reduction in activities outside of the home; this affects some of the benefits of their stay. Staffing levels are allocated at the start of the financial year; this limits the manager's ability to accommodate changes in young people's supervision ratios during the year. Staff creatively engage young people in alternative activities where external activities cannot be accommodated.

The manager and staff work in conjunction with professionals, families and young people to develop individualised care plans for the short breaks. Staff use a variety of communication methods, including the use of pictures, to seek and record young people's wishes. Young people respond to this and engage with staff in respect of their own care. Staff enjoy their work and are committed to the care of the young people. One staff member said, 'we are real people, we are natural, we are a fantastic staff team like an extended family for the young people.'

Young people receive predictable care from a stable staff team who implement consistent routines and boundaries. Consequently, young people are familiar with their caregivers; they feel safe and do not experience the potentially destabilising impact of the transition between their family homes and this provision. Planning by the staff team and manager currently means that young people and families experience fewer cancellations of and changes to their dates of stays. One parent said, 'they are very professional and my son really likes it there.'

Staff are attuned to the young people in this home and focus their care on young people's achievements. As a result, young people continue to make progress in all areas of their development and enjoy their time in this home. The manager completes matching young people for tandem stays, so that friends can stay together at the same time; this maximises the potential for young people to have positive experiences during their short breaks. One staff member said, 'we support young people to experience a different social setting and experiences, we know the young people and are predictable in our care, we support them to achieve.'

Most young people using this provision will not live independently as adults; staff acknowledge this and work in line with young people's care plans to encourage the development of an appropriate level of skill, for example in self-care. This means that young people repeat these skills in their family homes, reducing the need for some areas of family support. A social worker said, 'we are looking for support at home to continue the good work the staff do and the independence the young person has achieved since being in this home.'

The manager is proactive in seeking and providing updates in respect of all young people and regularly endeavours to make contact with young people's social workers. This ensures that the experiences of the young people in the home are acknowledged and are used to inform their future planning.

Information about this children's home

This home is a local authority short break provision. It provides care for up to seven young people who are diagnosed as having learning disabilities including autism and/or challenging behaviour. The aim is to assist young people to develop optimum independence and positive self-esteem in a nurturing environment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/12/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
09/06/2014	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/12/2013	CH - Full	Adequate
24/10/2013	CH - Full	Inadequate

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard, the registered provider must ensure that staff: (a)(i) help each child to develop their interests and hobbies; (ii) participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and (iii) make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and (b) that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies (Regulation 9(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii) and (b))	6 July 2015
ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development (Regulation 33(4)(a))	6 July 2015
maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))	12 June 2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home's procedures take into account the views of appropriate local services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing person's incidents in the area where the home is located (The Guide page 45 paragraph 9.29)
- ensure there are enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home. (The Guide page 51 paragraph 10.1)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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