

Children's Homes - Interim Inspection

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC409502
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	Darryl Freeman
Manager	Sally Summers
Inspector	Angie Bishop

Inspection date	06/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The home has a new manager; the registration process is currently being completed. She has significant experience of residential care that spans 30 years. Most recently, she has been the deputy manager of this home, in which she has worked for 18 years. She has a level five qualification in management and a foundation degree in care management. The impact of a change in management is minimised by appointing someone with whom staff and children already have a longstanding relationship. A member of staff said: 'The manager is really supportive and she would never ask us to do anything she would not be willing to do herself. She knows the staff and she knows the children and their families.'</p> <p>The manager has addressed the requirement and recommendation raised at the full inspection. A comprehensive child protection policy is now available to staff and children's records are up to date. Records are signed and dated by staff and provide a clear representation of children's views, wishes and feelings. There is regular management oversight of records.</p> <p>There is one recommendation from this inspection. In the event that a child is missing, their individual missing from care risk assessments currently lack a clear protocol for staff. Missing is not an issue in this home at present however, there are now two physically mobile children who require appropriate protocols should an incident occur. Staff effectively safeguard children in all other areas and underpin their practice with individual and generic risk assessments. Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice and this keeps children safe and alleviates anxiety amongst parents. One parent said, 'I don't trust anyone else with her care.'</p> <p>The manager meticulously plans transitions for stays in the home. Prior to admission, children now receive individual children's guides, which encompass their unique needs and levels of understanding. Staff also visit children at home and meet with them in their family environment. Visits to the provision by family members, professionals and children take place before any overnight stays. As a result, each child has a comprehensive induction and care plan, which prepares them and their families for use of the provision. Where children have needs that</p>	

staff are not familiar with, the manager invites members of the child's professional network to meet with staff. A social worker said: 'Prior to the child staying in the home, a specialist teacher from his school visited the home and shared the best ways of communicating and engaging him. Staff really responded to this and he loves his stays now.'

The manager is in the process of successfully re-engaging professionals with the home. She maintains open lines of communication and frequent sharing of information. This maximises the contribution that both she and the staff make to care planning and decision making. A social worker said: 'The staff are part of the overall plan, they attend meetings and give me an indicator of how the child functions away from his family home. They identify how he can be best supported to achieve.'

The manager and staff continue to ensure that children's views are integral to planning in the home and an independent advocate visits once a month to meet with the children. All children access a new document, with photographs of the manager, inspector and advocate. The document includes a pictorial explanation of how the children can contact the people pictured and why they may wish to. This ensures children are aware of people they can contact to share any worries or concerns with.

The manager and staff clearly understand the frustration in respect of limitations that children with disabilities can experience. As a result, they creatively promote children's engagement in a variety of in house and community activities. This enables children to develop their social skills and enjoy experiences in line with their peers. A parent said: 'She likes to do new things and she can do that here; it is a lot of fun for her.'

Children continue to receive tailored care that is consistent and dependable. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and staff and make progress in all areas of their development from commencing stays in this home. One of the children said: 'I love it here, my key worker is my favourite. We have a strong bond.'

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and sensory impairments. Children can be accommodated under short break arrangements. Additionally, one child can be accommodated as a permanent placement and one child can be accommodated under a shared care arrangement.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/07/2015	Full	Good
13/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
19/09/2014	Full	Good
23/01/2014	Interim	Good Progress

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

Recommendations

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

Ensure that staff are familiar with the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home, in particular, the steps they are to take to protect them if they do go missing. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45 paragraph 9.25)

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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