

## Children's home's inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>09/08/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC409506</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>Bedford Borough Council</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Martin Purbrick</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Jayne Almond</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Sonia Hay</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>09/08/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

## SC409506

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Children are happy visiting the service. A parent said their child views it as a sleepover and 'he loves going there'.
- Parents feel that their children are safe and well looked after by the staff.
- Individual placement plans and risk assessments are comprehensive and detail strategies used to manage children's needs and presenting behaviours.
- Staff have a good understanding of the varying needs of each of the children. Each child's package of care focuses on promoting new skills and experiences. This allows each child to increase their level of choice and independence.
- The home is warm and welcoming. There has been some redecoration since the last inspection and the sensory room is in the process of refurbishment.
- The experienced and committed staff team is working additional shifts to ensure that current staff shortages do not have an impact on the quality of care that children receive.
- All of the children attend education. Staff attend progress planning meetings at school. This ensures that the staff team is aware of educational attainment and incorporate targets into placement plans.
- Staff are familiar with the range of complex health needs for each child and proactive in monitoring changes to health needs.
- The managers offer a high level of support to the staff team. They also work shifts to ensure that they have direct time with the children.
- Some eligible staff do not hold the level 3 diploma qualification as required by the Children's Homes (England) 2015 Regulations.

## 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification by the relevant date. The individual must attain the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma') or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the level 3 diploma. The relevant date is, in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls two years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home, or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b))	11/02/2017

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is a short-break provision owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to six children between the ages of eight and 17 years diagnosed as having learning disabilities, including autism and/or challenging behaviour. The primary aim is to assist children to develop optimum independence and increased self-esteem in a nurturing environment.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/01/2016	Full	Good
12/05/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/12/2014	Full	Adequate
09/06/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Parents and staff are able to make statements about the progress that they have seen their children make because of their short breaks. The children are learning new skills and building on these at each visit. This has enabled children to achieve increased levels of independence. Staff celebrate these achievements through positive affirmation, rewards, verbal praise and certificates, which help children to feel valued.</p> <p>Staff encourage the children to participate in a range of activities, usually linked to areas with developmental targets. Staff hired a bouncy castle for a week to give the children something new in the large, well-equipped garden. A child's squeals of joy could be heard from some distance as they had their turn to bounce on the bouncy castle. There are planned visits to the home from visiting petting farms and zoos. This allows the children, some of whom struggle to access community-based activities, to benefit from a range of experiences. This creativity in the activity planning gives the children the ability to experience activities that many would struggle to access within the community.</p> <p>Staff facilitate coffee mornings for parents and carers. These assist families to build a larger support network and to have an opportunity to feed back any current concerns to staff. It is a good mechanism to gain parents' views about the service and the care provided for their children.</p> <p>Staff use the most appropriate communication to seek the views of children. One child asked staff to print questions to allow him to write answers during a key work session. This resulted in the child being able to communicate their feelings in the way they wanted. Residents' meetings are recorded in the form of a newsletter with pictorial descriptions. This allows the detail of the meetings to be shared in a child-friendly way with children who were not present.</p> <p>Two children arrived for their respite visits during the first day of inspection. They were both visibly happy to be at the home and were interacting well with their allocated members of staff. A parent said: 'He loves going there. The staff are amazing.'</p> <p>Medication is effectively managed. The parent of a child who suffers from seizures said they had 'no qualms' about sending their child to the home as they know that staff are fully trained and 'nowhere is as good, the staff are second to none.'</p> <p>Children have access to an independent advocacy service that visits the home</p>	

regularly. This ensures that the children have an additional independent person to communicate their feelings or concerns to about the service they receive.

Parents report that they are very happy with the service and the staff team. A parent said: 'I can't fault the service just the lack of having more of it.'

Each child has a behaviour management plan. The interactions observed during the inspection between the children and staff demonstrate that staff know each child well and are aware of how to encourage their participation in communicating, routine tasks and activities. This shows that each child is used to this level of care and nurturing from the staff.

The children attend local special schools. The staff receive reports detailing the progress that children make. These are formatted in a child-friendly way. This enables staff to share the reports with the children and identifies areas of development that form future targets and encourages aspirational goals. Staff attend progress and planning meetings for their key children. These are held at school and allow the staff to build child-focused working relationships with education professionals in order to support each child.

Children undergo a number of introductory meetings and visits in preparation for their respite stays. The staff team, families, social workers and professionals agree the pace. Staff take a staged approach when preparing children for ceasing to use the service. This transition can be quite traumatic for the children, especially when the visits and staff team have been part of their routine for a number of years. Staff demonstrate the positive steps that they are taking to manage a child's current negative behaviour, caused by his increased anxiety about ceasing to attend respite in a few months, having attended for ten years. Staff maintain clear boundaries and allow him to work through his emotions in a positive way.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>Individual risk assessments are thorough and are reviewed at set intervals unless required sooner. These are very detailed and identify triggers and strategies to minimise the level of risk. This means that staff are working with current information, knowledge of what works and are able to keep the children safe.</p> <p>Children receive a high level of staff supervision due to their complex needs. This means that there are no unauthorised absences from the home. Staff are aware of the protocols to be followed should this occur.</p>	

The home has contact with the designated officer in their local authority, who last visited the home in January 2016. There have been no safeguarding concerns since the last inspection.

Children are safeguarded because sufficient staffing levels ensure that the children, all of whom have complex health needs, receive the required levels of assistance. An example of this is the process of allocating staff to carry out personal care, which ensures that this is limited to staff known to the child rather than an agency worker.

The children have access to the internet, which has parental controls. This allows the children to develop their computing skills and to access information while protecting them from inappropriate internet content.

The staff do not use sanctions, as the behaviours presented are viewed as part of the children's inability to process their emotions rather than deliberate actions. The staff work with the children and their families to develop alternative strategies to help children to express their upset and frustration.

Restraint is rarely used. Staff utilise de-escalation techniques where possible. There has been one restraint since the last inspection, which was recorded and reviewed appropriately to ensure that restraint is only used as a last resort.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The registered manager has been in post since January 2015 and holds the NVQ level 4 management award. She is currently working towards her level 5 registered managers' award. Staff report the positive impact of the systems the manager has introduced. The registered manager is currently on long-term sickness leave. The two deputy managers are working extended days and extra shifts to minimise gaps caused by staff sickness.</p> <p>Staff supervision is effective. The format addresses both the progress and care planning for the children as well as staff development. A staff member described it as 'structured and helpful'.</p> <p>Staff recruitment and vetting is thorough and in line with the local authority's policies and procedure. A new staff member said that her induction process had been thorough, including the initial training. She described how she has been supported in her role by the managers.</p> <p>The managers regularly review the children's progress and the quality of their</p>	



respite stays. This ensures that the children benefit from a coordinated approach to the planning of allocations.

Staff assess and monitor children's progress from their personal starting points and limitations. A number of staff have been working at the service for several years and are able to state the progress that the children have made. The care plans detail the targets and life-skills focused upon for each child and reflect the progress made.

The statement of purpose accurately describes the service provided and the ethos of the home. The development plan details the aims and aspirations for the service. It identifies targets and potential barriers to progress. The managers have a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. The manager has addressed the requirement raised at the last inspection in respect of ensuring that new staff understand and are fully aware of children's risk assessments.

Families speak positively about the home and the staff. The only issue that arose related to some reduction in the number of respite stays children receive but there were no concerns about the standards and quality of care.

The unprecedented number of staff on long-term sickness, coupled with two staff on maternity leave, has resulted in a successful request for additional funding to facilitate the recruitment of additional temporary staff members. This will allow the team to offer the children increased allocations, more activities in the community and allow staff members to work fewer additional shifts. In discussing the current staff shortages, a team member said that it is, 'business as usual because the deputy managers are doing so much.' A senior manager confirmed that agreement has been received to commence recruitment to a number of posts.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **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 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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