

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	15/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC409506
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Bedford Borough Council
Registered address	Bedford Borough Council Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street Bedford MK42 9AP

Responsible individual	Martin Purbrick
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Sonia Hay

Inspection date	15/12/2016
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 sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The sole requirement made at the previous inspection related to ensuring that eligible staff complete the level 3 diploma training. With the exception of staff who are off work through long-term sickness or maternity leave the eligible staff are making good progress through the course. The requirement will be restated as this inspection has occurred prior to the original due date.</p> <p>The managers ensure that allocations of respite packages are co-ordinated to enable the children to benefit from having stays at the same time as children that they know or who have similar needs and interests. A parent said, 'They change my son's dates and make sure that he is with children that he gets on with.' This individualised approach ensures that each child can have an enjoyable stay.</p> <p>The managers ensure that any transitions into and out of the home are managed well. These include introductory visits and the gradual introduction of overnight stays. There has been little change in the mix of children using the service since the last inspection. One child ceased using the service following his 18th birthday and another has recently started to have overnights stays following a period of introductory tea visits. His parent said, 'They [the staff] do really well and go to great lengths to meet his needs. He has transitioned really well.'</p> <p>One child who has been using the service for a number of years is beginning the process of transition to an adult service. Staff, professionals and parent express concern that there is a delay in the identification of a suitable adult placement. The managers have arranged for additional visits from an advocacy service to support the child and his family with voicing their concerns about the local authority's delay in finding a suitable placement. The managers are proactive in their attempts to highlight the delay to ensure that the child has a thorough and phased transition.</p> <p>All the children are in education. One child attends a mainstream school. The staff supported him to submit a letter of complaint about having to go to and from school in the local authority branded minibuss. He felt that this was humiliating him in front of his peers. With the assistance of staff this was quickly remedied and addressed the child's concerns, resulting in his anxiety and upset reducing.</p>	

No children have gone missing from this home. Managers consult with the relevant professionals when concerns about the children's safety arise. The number of incidents and the use of physical interventions remain very low. The records are completed and monitored effectively.

The regular agency staff are now receiving physical intervention and medication training. This ensures that all staff on shift have the necessary training and helps the staff to safeguard the children.

The manager has resigned from post following an extended period of sickness. An interim agency manager commenced in post in November 2016. The new manager is using the monthly reports provided by the independent visitor as an initial indicator of areas to address, and they have a good grasp of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

The home has good working relationships with the children's schools, social workers and other professionals, such as health professionals. This provides a good network of support for the children.

Parents and external professionals speak positively about the consistency of care that the staff offer. They report that the staff are responsive and that the children are happy and settled and continue to benefit from the service.

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 who are 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
09/08/2016	Full	Good
25/01/2016	Full	Good
12/05/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/12/2014	Full	Adequate

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, 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, by the relevant date. (Regulation 32(4)(5))	30/04/2017

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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