

## Children's homes – Interim inspection

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>16/03/2017</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC409502</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Interim</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Bedford Borough Council</b>
<b>Registered provider 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>Sally Summers</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Sonia Hay</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>16/03/2017</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<p><b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b></p> <p>This home was judged <b>good</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has <b>improved in effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>One child lives at the home on a permanent basis and another stays as part of a shared care arrangement. A further 20 children use the short-break service. One child has ceased having stays due to their deteriorating ill health. Another child, who has been having stays for 10 years, is currently making a gradual transition to an adult provision. The manager has agreed for an extended period of transition to help reduce the anxieties that the child and her family are experiencing.</p> <p>Many of the children have been having short stays in the home for many years. New children have a series of introductory tea visits. These visits occur over varied lengths of time depending on the individual child's needs. The visits enable new children to familiarise themselves with the home and the staff before they start their stays.</p> <p>Three children have begun having overnight stays. One parent spoke of her initial reluctance to agree to her child having respite stays. She went on to say, 'Once he was here I had no fears and I can actually relax knowing that he is here. I didn't think that would have been possible.'</p> <p>The manager and her team are creative in finding ways to enable the children and their families to feel at ease during the children's stays. A parent described how the staff have purchased the same bedding that her son has at home. She said, 'Having the same bedding makes him more comfortable.' This attention to detail demonstrates the manager's commitment to ensuring that the children feel at home throughout each stay.</p> <p>Another parent spoke about her child developing increased levels of independence. She said, 'As a parent I am probably guilty of wanting to baby and protect him. As a family we have learned a lot from observing him in the home and from seeing how the staff work with him.' This child has benefited because his family are now allowing him to be more independent at home.</p> <p>The children take part in a wide range of activities both in the home and in the community. The manager ensures, where possible, that the children have their</p>	

stays at the same time as their friends. This enables the children to share their fun experiences with their friends. Parents said:

- 'My child loves it here. She is with children from her class and she sees it as big sleep-over with her friends.'
- 'He [child] has friends from school here so can socialise here in a way that he wouldn't at home.'

The children usually arrive for their stays straight from school and return to their families after school. The staff communicate with the schools in person or by using the children's communication books. This enables the staff in each setting to share information about the children's progress or any concerns that may arise with each other and the children's families.

Children do not go missing from home. There is no use of physical intervention. The manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses, and uses any significant events, although these are rare, as points of learning. The staff attend any relevant refresher training courses. This addresses the recommendation made at the last inspection and ensures that the staff are working with current knowledge and information.

The manager conducts internal monitoring of the home and the children's records using the independent visitor's monthly report as part of this process. There have been some delays in sending copies of the independent visit reports to Ofsted. This prevents Ofsted from having an up-to-date overview of the home.

The implementation of ideas from the staff and the utilisation of the skills and knowledge that the staff possess are indications of how the manager is seeking to further build on the aspirations that she has for the children, the staff and the service. These changes include:

- Introducing some modifications to the children's records. An example is creating a space on the children's daily notes to record a daily achievement.
- The creation of a three-monthly newsletter that the staff provide to children, families and professionals, informing of any updates in the home.

Professionals are positive about the work of the home and their working relationship with the manager and the staff. They described the manager and the team as proactive and one said, 'This is positive as it keeps us, as professionals, on our toes.'

Parents are positive about the care that their children receive and many would like their children to have additional stays. They said:

- I can't fault it. They [staff] are brilliant. I refused respite since [child] was seven years old but we tried it and loved it and that was a surprise. He's

happy and I don't have to worry. I can relax as all his needs are being met.'

- 'I can ring and speak to [manager]. I find her lovely. All of the staff are.'
- 'It is a valuable service and I don't know what I would do without it.'

## Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation under short-break arrangements for up to five children who have physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities and/or sensory impairments. 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
21/09/2016	Full	Good
06/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/07/2015	Full	Good
13/03/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

## **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 recommendations:

- Ensure that the independent visitor's monthly reports are supplied to HMCI in a timely manner. The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under Regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

## **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 that 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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