

# SC409502

Registered provider: Bedford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority and provides short breaks and respite for children and young people. The home's ethos is to provide a high-quality, safe service. The registered manager has been in post since 9 January 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 27 February 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 15 August 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/08/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/09/2016	Full	Good
06/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all children have a behaviour management plan.</p>	30/04/2019
<p>The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and</p> <p>are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))</p>	31/05/2019

### Recommendations

- The design of the home should, where appropriate, enable children to develop independence skills within the supportive environment of the home, including through encouraging independent use of kitchen and laundry areas. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Over time, and relative to their complex social and sensory needs and starting points, children make good progress in most aspects of their lives. The children build warm, trusting and helpful relationships with staff. Parents and professionals spoke positively of the progress that children make and the good work that is done to help children to achieve their goals and to develop positive behaviours. A parent said, 'My child has been coming here for many years. The staff meet all of his needs. His progress has been in small steps, but this is only due to his complex needs.' A professional said, 'The children benefit from being away from home. The children all look forward to going and to meeting their peer group. The home is good at matching. The children's social skills progress well.'

Staff work hard to establish trusting relationships with children. This is achieved through patience, consistent responses and a genuine warmth. As a result, children experience fewer incidents of distress and they learn to manage their emotions in more positive ways. This enables children to access community-based activities that previously would not have been considered possible. These activities have included trips to Cadbury World, the local woods for walks, lunch out, the cinema and going bowling. The children benefit from home-based activities such as arts and crafts and playing in the mud kitchen in the garden. There are plenty of activities and play equipment to enhance the children's fun, learning and development.

Children's education needs form an important part of their care. The staff support the children's attainment in education through the maintenance of good routines, provision of educational activities and staff's participation in multi-agency meetings and the review of services. All of the children attend an education provision. An education professional said, 'The staff communicate well with us and the children. The children are always happy when they are going to the home after school. The staff work with us to ensure consistency for the children.'

The home is pleasantly decorated and furnished throughout. The staff have worked hard to add warmth and special touches to the decor. The 'wow tree' that hangs in the hallway is amazing. The tree holds flowers with photos of all of the children at the centre. Each time a child achieves something, like stirring a biscuit mix, getting dressed independently or being sociable, a petal is added with full details of their achievement. However, the home's kitchen is not accessible for all children to use to participate in baking activities and to learn independence skills.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Staff make sure that children are safe. They have a good understanding of safeguarding practice. The staff are fully aware of their responsibility to protect the children from abuse. They confidently described reporting procedures, including the organisation's

whistle-blowing procedure. This knowledge helps to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported and dealt with promptly.

There is an effective protocol in place for staff to follow if a child goes missing. The high level of supervision of each child means that there have been no incidents of children going missing from the home.

Staff use a positive reinforcement approach to help the children to understand behaviour. Staff set clear expectations and boundaries, which children respond to well. The nurturing approach relies heavily on positive rewards and incentives. This often results in the children learning positive behaviour strategies. Consequently, the home is very settled and there are few instances of challenging behaviour. However, not all of the children have a behaviour management plan.

The staff understand the individual vulnerabilities and the potential risks to the health, well-being and safety for each child. The manager implements effective safety measures. High staffing levels provide the children with constant, appropriate supervision, care and support, which protects and keeps them safe.

The registered manager and staff are very clear about risks to the children. They assess these risks well and take steps to minimise and control them. Care plans reflect the excellent care that children receive from staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

A culture of continuous improvement is engrained in the organisation and in the manager's leadership style. The manager and deputy manager have good insight into the children's strengths, vulnerabilities and progress from their starting points. Both offer good support to the staff through their daily presence at the home. The managers lead a team of staff who are highly experienced in and dedicated to caring for children who have complex needs. The managers are accessible and approachable. When necessary, they offer practical support to the staff. Regular team meetings ensure that the children are discussed in detail and that they remain the focus of activities at the home.

The staff are competent in their roles. They are supported through mandatory training in core areas, including safeguarding, moving and handling and emergency first aid. The staff undertake more specific or targeted training following discussion with the manager during their annual performance reviews or supervision sessions. Specific training has included understanding issues such as domestic violence and neglect, understanding muscular dystrophy, and effective team work. This training ensures that the staff have the skills that they need to meet the children's individual needs.

Professionals and parents were complimentary about the good level of care that the home provides and the effective communication that they have with the staff. Professionals said that the staff and the manager call them regularly with updates, and that the manager is focused on good outcomes for the children.

The manager is developing the children's case records. Although the manager is using progress records, the system of recording evidence requires further embedding into practice to achieve the objectives fully. Case records require further monitoring and

oversight to ensure that all records are clear and up to date.

An independent person visits the home and produces monthly monitoring reports. The information contained in the reports gives a good overview of the home, the staff and the children who live and stay there. A dedicated section for the children is colourful, bright and a pleasure to read. However, the independent person does not always give their opinion of the effectiveness of safeguarding or the well-being of the children as required by regulation.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC409502

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP

**Responsible individual:** Martin Purbrick

**Registered manager:** Sally Summers

## Inspector

Cathy Russell, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
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