

SC409502

Registered provider: Bedford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, which is run by the local authority, provides short breaks and respite care for up to 24 children who have physical and learning disabilities and complex health needs.

The manager has been registered since January 2016.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 February 2020

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 27 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2019	Full	Good
15/08/2017	Full	Good
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/09/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children build trusting relationships with the staff during their short-break stays. The children spend time with their friends and enjoy stimulating activities in a safe environment. One child said that one of the best things is that she can have a sleepover with her friends, and this makes her happy.

The staff compile clear, informative and individualised child-centred plans that specify the children's care needs. Parents are involved in drafting these plans, which include the children's daily routines. This helps the children to understand what will happen during their stay.

The staff creatively celebrate the children's achievements. Children paint wooden shapes that are illustrated with the children's photographs and their incentive targets. Once the children achieve their targets, these shapes are displayed on the achievement tree. The staff give the children certificates for doing something well. These incentives encourage the children to recognise their progress.

The staff have a good understanding of the children's complex health needs. A specialist nurse writes the health protocols for the children who have specific health needs. The nurse provides professional oversight and support to enable the staff to meet the children's needs.

Staff understand that transitions into the home can be difficult for the children and their families. The staff plan children's first stays on an individualised basis. One parent said that her child had never been away from home before and initially it was difficult. The parent said that, once she saw how much her daughter enjoys the visits, she wished she had used the service years ago.

The staff are skilled in understanding the children's communication needs. They recognise subtle cues from non-verbal children because they know them well.

Children are involved in planning activities and deciding on purchases for the house. The children have regular opportunities to express their wishes and feelings during house meetings and key-work sessions. The manager responds to the children's requests in writing and details any actions. The children can see that the manager acts on their requests.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children have individualised risk assessments. However, the risk assessments are not always updated with new information. This means that the staff may not be working with information on current risks, reducing the effectiveness of the risk assessment.

The safeguarding and confidential reporting policies are unclear and fail to identify the designated safeguarding lead or how to report concerns. This means that staff may not know what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The manager has not sought information from external agencies to inform the location risk assessment. Additionally, she has not included the potential risks to children if they go missing from the home. Despite the high levels of staff supervision, this lack of full information reduces the protective factors to keep the children safe.

Several versions of the children's guide are available depending on the child's age, understanding and communication needs. Although the guide is child-friendly, it does not explain the daily routine of the home. This means that new children may feel unclear about what happens next.

Staff record information during the children's stays. However, the records are not informative enough and fail to provide a clear account of the children's stays.

The staff understand the children's vulnerabilities and have undertaken safeguarding training. Parents said that they feel that their children are safe because the staff know them well and look after them in accordance with their individual needs.

Children know how to complain. A child said that she would talk to the staff and that they would help her. Children are asked in key-work sessions and house meetings if they are happy staying at the home.

The staff challenge unwanted behaviours by reminding the children to use kind words and actions. The staff role model staff politeness and kindness, which encourages a calm and happy environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is well established. She has a registered manager's award and relevant experience for her role. The manager and the deputy manager work well together and share the same vision for the home.

The manager has developed a positive ethos and culture that is child-focused. Children are clearly central to any decisions about the home. A parent said that their child loves staying at the home because they have so much to do.

The manager works well with external professionals and parents. This partnership working ensures that information is shared effectively and enables the staff to work in the best interests of the children.

Effective monitoring systems help the manager to understand the strengths of the home and the areas for development. This enables her to prioritise improvements.

Staff are up to date with the organisation's mandatory training. All eligible staff have achieved, or are working towards, a relevant level 3 qualification. Staff receive regular, supportive supervision that considers their personal development.

The manager has met the two requirements and recommendations that were raised at the last inspection.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the risk assessments are regularly updated and accurate.</p>	27/03/2020
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular—</p> <p>provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; and</p> <p>describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34(1)(b)(2)(a)(b)(f))</p>	27/03/2020

Recommendations

- The children's guide should help children to understand the day-to-day routines of the home, and what care they can expect to receive while living at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.22)
- The location review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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

Inspectors

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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