

SC409506

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 six children with physical and/or learning disabilities and/or complex health needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2017.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/06/2021	Full	Good
20/02/2020	Full	Good
07/03/2019	Full	Good
26/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of this inspection, two children were having overnight stays. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on from the home and two children have started to receive care at the home.

Children benefit from outstanding care. The staff show understanding, love, kindness and patience when supporting the children. Children have complex communication needs. Staff use extremely creative ways to help children express themselves and make choices. They build trusting relationships with the children. This empowers children to have a voice. They feel safe, loved and valued.

Children's wishes and feelings are held in high regard and are captured in many ways. When children make unrealistic requests, the manager and staff find creative ways to fulfil them. One child requested a holiday to Africa. The manager and staff responded by creating an enchanting make-believe jungle through a walkway in the home. Children chose safari animal toys, a waterfall and soothing lighting. The jungle is enjoyed by the children for relaxing and listening to stories. Another child requested that a communal room is turned into a real supermarket. Whenever the child stays at the home, he has his own pop-up supermarket to play in. The manager always responds to the children's wishes and, when children write to him, he takes the time to respond with a letter. Children are heard and feel empowered to ask for what they want.

Staff go above and beyond expectations to support the children. Staff have gone to the children's family homes and slowly prepared them for haircuts. Staff have given children haircuts that otherwise children would not be able to tolerate. The manager and staff, following consultation with children, have created a cinema facility to enable children to have a true-to-life cinema experience. Some children cannot access cinemas in the community due to their sensory needs. Staff are consistently finding creative ways to improve children's well-being and happiness.

Parents said that the staff are amazing and provide exceptional care for their children. One parent said that it is a home-from-home experience for her child. Her child loves staying at the home, and the parent never has to worry as the care is 'second to none'. Parents are invited to regular coffee mornings. Staff planned a Jubilee party that the local mayor opened. Parents, social workers, staff and children, including children who previously received care at the home, attended. Parents feel reassured that their children are receiving excellent child-centred care. Parents and children feel welcome, and the manager's and staff's approach are very inclusive.

Staff encourage children to develop independent living skills. The staff and the cook support children to enjoy cooking and baking and to learn basic kitchen safety. The

staff help children to learn about personal hygiene and life skills at an appropriate level. The staff have worked hard to help one child manage his personal care more independently. He now needs less support from staff and has increased independence and dignity. Promoting independence skills means that children are well prepared when they move on from the home.

Staff encourage children to try new and enriching activities. One child has been given the role of the activity coordinator. She has gathered views of other children's interests to help plan activities. Children take part in activities that they have requested, including trips to birds of prey sanctuaries, the seaside and a theme park. Children have had animal petting zoos and magicians visit the home. The staff look at research to inform them of activities that help the development of children's skills, such as rock climbing. Giving children these opportunities improves their self-esteem, encourages them to experience new activities, enables them to develop problem-solving skills and to develop socially and emotionally.

Children all attend specialist education provisions to meet their individual needs. Staff have excellent communication with the school staff and sporadically observe the children in their school environment. Staff understand that children respond differently in a school environment. Staff learn how to help children with their education. Children consequently get the help that they need to succeed with their education.

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

Children are safe at the home. Staff have appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are well equipped to, and understand how to, manage safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding incidents are taken seriously. Children are safeguarded effectively.

Children do not go missing from the home. There are high staff levels and children are constantly supervised. Staff understand the vulnerability of the children and take effective actions to keep children safe.

Physical intervention has been used on some occasions. Physical interventions are appropriate and proportionate. Staff use their positive relationships with children and, therefore, the need for physical intervention is minimised.

The manager ensures that allegations made by the children are investigated promptly. He informs all relevant professionals about any allegations. Working together with other professionals provides the manager with external professional oversight of any investigations. This joint working safeguards the children effectively.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is exceptional. He models high standards of care and has high expectations of staff. He is highly experienced, holds a relevant level 5 qualification, and is supported by two experienced and knowledgeable deputy managers, who

help embed high standards of care. Children benefit from a well-led, knowledgeable, consistent and stable staff team that cares for them.

Staff said that the managers are 'fantastic'. Staff said that they love working at the home and that they feel appreciated and valued. Staff feel fully supported and said that managers have excellent relationships with the children. Staff said that the managers regularly spend time with children and will always make time for staff. Staff feel committed and motivated to deliver exceptional care to children.

Staff receive excellent training, which is bespoke to meet children's individual needs. The deputy manager has delivered in-depth sensory training for the staff and included case studies and written exercises around children's specific sensory needs. The training informed staff practice. New sensory equipment was purchased for the children's sensory room from the findings of the training. Most staff have a relevant level 3 diploma or are working towards the qualification. Staff are eager to learn, and they implement highly effective strategies. The excellent outcomes for children illustrate this. Staff understand children's complex needs and feel empowered to deliver excellent care.

Social workers are impressed by the exceptional care provided by the managers and staff. One social worker said that this is the best home they have ever had for helping children with complex needs. Social workers said that the children love staying at the home and that the staff know the children well and go above and beyond expectations. Working cohesively with external professionals helps to ensure that children receive joined-up child-centred care.

The manager is an excellent advocate for children. One child was becoming distressed on his school transport with other children. The manager ensured that the child had an independent advocate so that his transport needs were reviewed. Vulnerable children are given a voice and the child's family has been supported to access solo transport for their child. The child has been able to manage journeys to and from school without becoming regularly distressed.

The deputy manager champions research in practice. Research is embedded and informs staff practice. Staff have consulted with local commissioners to improve accessibility to information for children with additional needs. Staff link research to inform key work and activities for the children. The managers incorporate different methodologies to staff supervisions, inductions and training. Children at the home and in the wider community will be able to access important information. Children are taking part in activities that can improve their skills and cognitive functioning. Staff understand different research approaches and are confident in implementing them to consistently benefit children's care experiences.

The manager's monitoring of the home is generally excellent. An independent visitor monitors the home monthly and provides a detailed report that includes feedback from professionals, children and parents. The manager promptly actions any recommendations. Some of the report submissions to Ofsted, however, were delayed. One report highlighted a safeguarding incident that, although well

managed, had not been notified to Ofsted before the visitor had noted it. This reduces Ofsted's ability to monitor the home.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted of all notifiable events without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- The registered person should ensure that, following the independent person's visits carried out at the home, the regulation 44 report is sent to Ofsted in an appropriate time frame. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC409506

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bedford Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Martin Purbrick

Registered manager: Alexander Milligan

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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