

# 1183479

Registered provider: Slough Children First Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home offers residential short breaks for children with learning and/or physical disabilities. In exceptional circumstances, the home may provide known children with an extended or full-time care package. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children.

The manager has submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

### Inspection dates: 6 and 7 September 2022

**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:** 13 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Good
05/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
23/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Children make progress when they stay at the home. Staff help children to develop their independence skills and work with them on their individual education targets. Children's achievements are celebrated and their personalised certificates are displayed by staff on a 'wow' board which is prominently placed in the home. The progress children make extends to their educational development and is evident when they return home to their family.

Staff put a strong emphasis on embracing children's diverse backgrounds. Children's care plans contain relevant information about their culture, religion and preferred language. Staff respond to this by finding out about the different cultures and learn the key words and phrases of children's first language. This helps children to feel valued, important and understood.

Staff regularly seek and act on children's views and are creative in using communication aids to involve the children in day-to-day decisions about the home. For instance, staff help children to make choices, including choosing meals and planning activities.

Since the last inspection, the premises have been fully refurbished. Children were involved in choosing the decor and colour schemes for the home. The manager has purchased comfortable and brightly coloured furniture which meets the needs of the children and provides a homely feel. Each child has a poster on their bedroom door which displays information about their interests and 'superpowers'. This provides a personalised welcome to their bedroom. Despite the refurbishment, some areas of the home require attention. For example, a broken window had not been repaired promptly, there were no curtains in one child's bedroom and areas of the garden were unkempt.

Children have detailed care plans which give a real sense of their character. Staff share these plans with social workers to aid their understanding of the children who stay at the home. On occasion, institutionalised language is used to describe children's behaviour or aspects of the service they receive. This detracts from the child-centred approach the manager and staff strive for.

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

Staff are trained and skilled in identifying safeguarding concerns. They know how and when to take action if there are concerns about a child's welfare.

Staff communicate well with social workers, parents and school staff when they have concerns or issues about children that need to be raised. Children are relaxed, comfortable and confident around staff. Parents say their children are safe during their time at the home.

Staff use communication aids effectively to help children understand boundaries. Physical intervention is rarely used. When it is used, the manager ensures that they review what happened and identifies learning for future practice. When poor practice relating to physical intervention has been identified by the manager, prompt and appropriate action is taken. Consequences are used rarely and only with individual children who understand their meaning. This helps children to understand what is expected of them.

Staff understand children's health needs and know how to respond to medication errors. There are good monitoring systems in place, and relevant training for staff to ensure that medication is managed safely.

Staff listen to children and help them to make a complaint when they wish to. The complaints process has been adapted using communication aids which the children understand and is displayed throughout the home. As a result, children know how to make a complaint. The manager responds well to complaints and ensures that they are fully investigated.

Staff understand the vulnerabilities of the children who stay at the home. Staff know how to keep children safe and use risk assessments well to identify and manage risk. However, children's plans are not always individualised to their needs. For example, some children with specific health needs have audio surveillance in their bedrooms, which is monitored by staff. Children's bedroom doors also have door alarms fitted, which are routinely used. Children's plans do not reflect why these methods of monitoring are needed, how the devices are being used and monitored by staff or how effective their use is.

The manager ensures that recruitment checks for newly recruited staff are carried out. However, on one occasion, a reference was not sought from both current employers for one member of staff. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that all required checks were sought by the manager to inform them of the individual's suitability for the role they had applied for.

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

The manager has an ambitious vision for the home and demonstrates high standards of care for children. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have a clear development plan in place.

The manager has developed effective monitoring systems and seeks the views of children and their parents to support the development of the home. The manager has excellent relationships with the children, their parents and professionals. Staff are accessible to parents and ensure that they are informed about their child's stay at the home. Parents know how to raise concerns and complaints. As a result, they are confident in letting their children stay at the home.

Staff are appropriately trained and benefit from regular supervision sessions. The manager ensures that staff understand policies, through initiatives such as 'policy of the week'. Individual staff are champions for different areas in the home and they undertake these duties with enthusiasm and pride. The turnover of staff is low, which means children receive care from a consistent and experienced staff team.

Children are introduced to the home through careful planning and consideration of their individual needs. Children have the opportunity to get to know the staff and the other children at the home at their own pace. The manager ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills to care for each child before they stay at the home. Staff involve children who already visit the home to welcome and introduce new children who will be staying. During this time, the views of children and parents are sought by the manager to ensure that the introductions are smooth.

Staff receive a comprehensive induction when they start working at the home. During the refurbishment of the home, children and staff were based at another home. Before the home started operating again, the manager ensured that the staff team received a full introduction to the newly developed building.

There has been one occasion when an incident considered to be serious was delayed in being reported to Ofsted. This has occurred as a result of inconsistent deputising arrangements when the manager has been absent from the home. Plans are already being developed to address this shortfall.

## 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 registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(d))</p> <p>In particular, children must have clear plans in relation to the individualised use of surveillance, and its use must be subject to ongoing monitoring and review.</p>	7 December 2022
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that maintenance required at the home is responded to promptly and the garden is a suitable space for children to use.</p>	7 December 2022
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))</p>	7 December 2022

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the manager and staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about children

must be recorded in a way that will be helpful to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice by ensuring that all required employment checks are completed for newly appointed staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

## **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:** 1183479

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

**Registered provider:** Slough Children First Limited

**Registered provider address:** Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough SL1 2EL

**Responsible individual:** Saima Arif

**Registered manager:** Ranbir Sidhu

## Inspectors

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector  
Kelly Marchmont, Regulatory Inspection Manager



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