

SC409502

Registered provider: Bedford Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks and respite care for up to five children with physical and/or learning disabilities and complex health needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2016.

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 August 2023

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: 22 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2022	Full	Good
20/07/2021	Full	Good
12/02/2020	Full	Good
27/02/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of the inspection, four children were staying overnight at the home. Throughout the home, there is a warm, welcoming atmosphere. The accommodation is bright, colourful and designed to engage children of all ages. A large garden surrounds the house. The garden is full of activities that stimulate children's senses, which encourages their enjoyment and learning. A wheelchair racetrack that a child requested has recently been added. This was provided by a local company as part of community engagement. Children love the racetrack and enjoy the space and a sense of freedom. There is a sensory and stimulating mud kitchen, a large bug house and a gnome garden that has colour and a sense of comedy.

Staff show the children love and affection. They use humour to engage the children in shared activities. The children respond to the staff warmly and share a sense of humour. Children thrive in this atmosphere. They can choose the night that they stay. Staying overnight and making friends develops children's social skills. This has given children a sense of self-confidence.

Overnight stays are precious to children and their parents. Staff recognise that working systemically supports all members of the families. Brothers and sisters are encouraged to visit the home and join in some of the experiences. This helps them to know that their family member is cared for and safe.

Parents can combine their child's allocated nights so that their children can enjoy longer stays at the home. This encourages children to build new routines and try new activities. For some families, this has provided time to rest.

The children make remarkable progress. Staff are motivated to help them achieve outcomes that change their lives. Parents say that their children welcome the opportunity to try new skills. For one child, months of encouragement and positive reinforcement meant that he learned to wash his hair and have a bath independently. These skills help children to prepare for adult life.

The staff are innovative in obtaining the voice of the child and use a variety of methods to enable all the children to contribute to the development of the service. Non-verbal children benefit from staff who understand their individual ways of communication. This helps children to feel heard and listened to.

An independent advocate, who talks to the children to provide another layer of choice, visits the home monthly. Children can meet with the advocate, who is able to provide support, advice or be a conduit for change. One child recently sought support regarding an extremely difficult decision. The advocate also provides a service for parents. This is an excellent service that enhances children's lives.

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

The home has effective safeguarding systems. Partner professionals say that safeguarding concerns are shared effectively. Parents know that staff will respond to any safeguarding matters to protect their children. All staff have safeguarding training to ensure that responses are consistent and informed.

Incidents are reported swiftly by staff. They use reflective and detailed incident reports that explore children's behaviour, their triggers, and outcomes. Quality assurance is provided by the managers, who can identify patterns and emerging trends. Team meeting discussions help staff to recognise learning points.

Relationships with the local authority designated officer and social workers are strong. Staff attend all children's meetings. A professional said, 'The staff know the children exceptionally well. They advocate beautifully for children.' The staff contribute to difficult decision-making with partner agencies.

Staff have welcomed the opportunity to develop internet safety training and a support pack for children to share with parents. Children are offered a variety of sessions that are tailored to their individual needs and abilities. Parents are consulted with to reinforce children's learning. One child has helped to design a mobile phone contract, which he has shared with his parent. This helps him to understand online safety.

Children feel safe at the home. Risks are considered and managed effectively. Staff encourage children to participate in adventurous activities that are new. These provide children with valuable experiences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is well qualified and has a wide breadth of experience in managing short breaks. An extremely high standard of leadership and management is evident in the preparation and meticulous organisation of stays. The managers are proactive in raising standards.

The manager regularly works on shift and has a very good understanding of children's needs. Most staff are established and experienced. They are dedicated to providing the best experiences for children. One staff member said that they could not imagine working anywhere else.

Staff are unanimously positive about the manager and the deputy manager. The staff say that they are good role models. Staff feel valued and fully involved in developing practice.

Managers have a highly effective quality assurance system. They monitor feedback from parents, assess patterns from safeguarding meetings and hold prompt reviews

that update risk management plans. This helps to ensure that plans remain highly effective and relevant to individual needs.

The managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They encourage staff to contribute to forward planning. This supports actions to address any weaknesses and improve standards of care.

Staff receive a high level of training. This helps them to provide care that is consistent and effective. Leaders are developing the use of therapeutic approaches to further equip staff with new skills that are informed by research. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. They are encouraged to develop new ideas from research to support training plans. Recently, staff have used new communication tools for the non-verbal children. This has supported children's ability to express their views.

The relationships with partner agencies and stakeholders are very strong. Social workers, school and health representatives say that the communication could not be better. The school nurse said, 'The children benefit from being there and the parents rave about it.'

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: Christian Weatherley

Registered manager: Sally Summers

Inspectors

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector
Trudy Potter, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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