

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 for up to six children at a time.

The home currently provides short breaks to 21 children and full-time care to one child. During this inspection, there were seven children accessing the service across the two days.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 24 August 2022.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

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: 6 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/09/2022	Full	Good
13/02/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Good
05/02/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have enjoyable experiences during their stays. They benefit from staying in a well-maintained and welcoming home. Staff empower the children. They support them to make choices about their meals and the activities they get involved in. Children have opportunities to enjoy their individual interests, such as watching their favourite television programmes, enjoying time out in the garden or relaxing in the home's sensory room.

Staff cater to the children's individual needs. They are attentive and act on the children's non-verbal cues. For example, one child who does not cope well with noise is supported to enjoy time in quieter parts of the home. Staff ensure that the child's ear defenders are always readily available. The great care and attention staff show the children has led to secure, trusting relationships being formed between them.

The children are the staff's primary focus. Staff actively seek to understand the children's feelings and views act on them. They encourage children's verbal communication. They also communicate with children in other meaningful ways, such as using sign language and pictures and symbols. The staff praise the children for the positive things they do. Children receive certificates and their achievements are celebrated on a 'wow' board in the home. The staff provide children with an inclusive environment where they are well understood and positively encouraged.

There is effective partnership working between staff and network professionals. Staff ensure that children's parents and the professionals are kept well informed. Staff are keen for the right decisions to be made for the children. They attend review meetings and contribute to the children's care planning. Social care professionals and children's parents are complimentary about the care and support the staff provide to the children. One professional said that the home has become a child's 'second home' and that the child loves being there.

The staff ensure that the children's health needs are well met. Appropriate actions have been taken in response to a small number of medication errors and concerns regarding the handling of children's medication. Learning from the investigations has led to practice improvements.

High-standard and consistent care from the staff has contributed to children making significant individual progress. Children have grown in confidence and are now able to express their feelings. Their independence and personal care skills have also developed. Children are calmer in their behaviours and as a result have been more able to enjoy community outings with others.

Diversity and equality are well promoted in the home. Children are cared for by a diverse staff team, who meet children's cultural, religious, dietary and individual

needs well. One child at times communicates with the home's manager in the language of their shared heritage. This helps the child to experience feelings of security and belonging.

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

The committed staff nurture the children. They are mindful of the children's vulnerabilities and are patient and attentive when caring for them. Staff know the children well. They are aware of their likes and dislikes and what may be triggers for them. They use this knowledge to provide the children with individualised care which meets their needs well. Consistent approaches from staff help to reinforce boundaries and lead to children feeling safe and secure.

Professionals and children's parents are confident that the children are well cared for and safe during their stays at the home. Children have not gone missing from the home. Staff are guided by risk assessments that are individual to each child. Sometimes, door alarms and audio monitors are used as an additional support for staff to ensure children's safety. Risk assessments clearly reflect the reasons for their use for each child.

Staff ensure that children have routine and structure. This has contributed to children becoming settled and a reduction in the number of incidents. Restraint is rarely used by staff. When incidents do occur, staff skilfully use de-escalation techniques to support the children. Close partnership working with parents ensures that behavioural strategies are shared, to help parents manage difficult situations at home. This leads to children experiencing a consistent approach.

Staff spend time doing meaningful work with the children helping them better understand keeping safe. They focus on important matters such as stranger danger. Staff are mindful that behaviours are a form of communication and seek to understand the situation from the child's perspective, using their preferred communication aids or styles. They explore the cause of inappropriate behaviours by children, such as hitting others, to better understand how to prevent this happening again.

Staff are aware of how to escalate concerns about children's welfare, should the need arise. The manager takes all complaints seriously and ensures that they are appropriately investigated and addressed.

Regular health and safety checks are carried out. This helps to ensure that the home environment is safe for children and others. Pre-employment checks are carried out to a good standard. This minimises the risk of unsuitable people being employed to work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager strives to ensure that children are cared for by skilled staff. The strengths of each staff member are recognised and used to support the

development of less experienced staff. Staff are provided with a wide range of relevant training which ensures that they continue to meet children's complex needs well. This includes training on managing epilepsy and awareness of anaphylaxis. Consequently, children receive good-quality care from knowledgeable staff.

The manager closely monitors the children's progress. She is aspirational about what they can be supported to achieve. She has led staff to support children towards meeting set targets that mirror their educational targets. This joint effort between staff and education professionals supports children's development and progress.

Staff feel well supported and are happy working in the home. They are supported through supervision sessions and team meetings. They are guided on caring for the children, in meetings in which discussions take place about children's changing needs. Children benefit from consistent care from a stable, motivated staff team.

The manager has shown strong commitment to ensuring that the children's needs are well met. She has offered extended stays for several children. This has been when the children or their families have been in crisis and in need of additional support. As a result, children have benefited from nurturing care and stability in a familiar environment, from staff they know well, during difficult periods of their lives.

The manager ensures that practice in the home meets expected standards. This is in part achieved by her carrying out regular audits and working closely with staff, overseeing their practice. Steps are taken to ensure that staff understand the home's policies and procedures and that they adhere to them. The manager is committed to ongoing development.

Requirements and recommendations set at the home's last inspection have been met and no new ones have been set.

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

Inspector

Sasha Reid, Social Care Inspector

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