

SC039900

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of four local authority homes. It is registered for up to seven young people who have learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 December 2017

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 **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people make good progress as a direct result of living at the home.
- Staff help young people to sustain good school attendance and academic progress.
- Staff support young people to have a say in decisions that affect them, so that their wishes and feelings are respected.
- Young people enjoy a wide range of varied activities.

- Family members are made welcome.
- Staff recognise that young people are vulnerable and that they require high levels of supervision to stay safe.
- Managers make sure that behaviour management plans offer staff clear guidance on how to manage each young person's behaviour.
- Partnership working is strong.
- The manager and deputy manager are passionate and committed to providing high-quality care to young people.
- Staff receive regular practice supervision.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home's safeguarding policy does not consider the individual needs of the young people living at the home.
- Some areas of the home require attention. The sensory room requires redesigning to meet the needs of young people and the indoor hot tub requires repairing.

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
21/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/11/2015	Full	Outstanding

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child and to enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This is with specific reference to children having access to the hot tub and having a suitably designed sensory room.</p>	28/02/2018
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy, which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34(1)(a))</p>	28/02/2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress as a direct result of living at the home. A key strength is how staff quickly form nurturing and caring relationships with young people. Staff practice is warm and young people flourish because of these positive attachments. One parent recently shared how they had seen positive progress in their daughter. 'My daughter has blossomed into a young woman. She has developed her independence skills, she has done more things than I could have thought of.'

Staff make sure that young people's experiences are full of fun. This is apparent from the display boards set up around the house that have photos of the young people participating in different activities.

Staff work hard to enable young people to stay in contact with family. Young people are supported to spend time with their families, both in the home and out in the wider community. This ensures that young people continue to build relationships and attachments with those who are significant to them.

Most of the house is maintained to a good standard. However, the sensory room requires redesigning so that the facility matches the specific needs of young people. In addition, the home's hot tub has been broken for some time. This means that young people are missing out from the benefits this facility offers.

Young people attend school full time and their attendance and punctuality are good. One young person has successfully re-engaged in school after a lengthy period of absence. Teachers regularly liaise with staff to discuss young people's educational progress and any areas of difficulty. This routine communication helps to ensure that young people's welfare and learning are promoted.

Staff work with young people to understand their preferred methods of communication. For one young person, this help has enabled him to increase his range of vocabulary and means that he is more able to express his wishes and needs. Through support, one young person is now able to use a knife and fork and to join other young people for his meals.

Staff secure young people's views through house meetings, key-work sessions and daily conversations. Consequently, young people feel involved and valued, and they know that adults are interested in their opinions.

Young people benefit from a range of activities that enhance their social experiences and offer them new opportunities. These include activities in the home, such as baking and arts and crafts, and going out into the community to the cinema, doing voluntary work such as zookeeper's experience, and day trips.

Young people's moves into and from the home are well planned. Any move is set at a pace that meets the young person's individual needs. Young people are prepared for semi-independent living, or moves to adult care. They are helped to take more responsibility for their bedrooms, laundry and personal care. This approach helps to promote young people's self-confidence and self-esteem.

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

The registered manager and staff promote the safety and well-being of young people at all times. The registered manager provides clear direction and support to staff about safe and appropriate day-to-day practice. However, the safeguarding policy does not consider the individual needs of the young people within the home. The absence of detail hinders the opportunity for staff to provide continuity of care.

Staff focus on promoting positive behaviour. When young people's behaviour falls below the expected standard, staff patiently support young people. They communicate with each young person in a way that matches their understanding and ability. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort, and records are thoroughly completed in line with the organisation's policy and procedure.

The registered manager and staff work closely with health services, schools, the local

authority and the police. Local police officers visit the home from time to time, and this helps young people to develop an understanding of their role in keeping the whole community safe.

Young people do not go missing from home. Staff recognise that young people are extremely vulnerable and require high levels of supervision to stay safe. Staff are alert to the potential risks of exploitation. This includes staff receiving awareness training around the risks of sexualised behaviours and of child sexual exploitation. This training helps to increase the staff team's knowledge in keeping young people safe.

Staff have a good knowledge of fire safety and ensure that fire drills take place on a regular basis.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has vast experience in residential childcare and uses his extensive knowledge to oversee young people's day-to-day care. A qualified and experienced staff team supports the manager.

The manager works hard to retain staff and to help them to feel valued.

The manager and deputy manager are passionate in their aim to provide high-quality care to young people. This includes ensuring that young people continue to make progress across all areas of their development.

The registered manager keeps the home's statement of purpose under review. The extent and breadth of staff training are exemplary and help to equip staff in their work with young people. The registered manager ensures that staff have access to specialist training when required. For example, staff recently received training to support young people who have autistic spectrum disorder.

Social workers have very positive views about staff. They are clear that young people's progress is due to the strong relationships that young people have with staff and the firm boundaries that are in place. Staff work collaboratively with social workers to ensure that local authority plans and targets are adhered to and regularly reviewed.

The registered manager works closely with the independent visitor to address any identified shortfalls in order to improve the quality of care for young people. The staff team has high aspirations for young people and its members are very clear about their responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care

provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC039900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Council House, Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 2AA

Responsible individual: Merlin Joseph

Registered manager: Mark Bates

Inspector

Lisa Walsh, social care inspector

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