

# SC039900

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to seven children with learning and physical disabilities.

The home has a registered manager who is suitably qualified and experienced and has been registered with Ofsted since April 2009.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 4 November 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 14 to 15 September 2021

**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      requires improvement to be good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 19 November 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
19/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/10/2018	Full	Good
18/12/2017	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

There are four children currently living in the home. Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home, and another has moved out.

Before children move into the home, the registered manager undertakes an assessment as to whether children can be appropriately cared for by staff. In the main, these decisions are well considered. In one instance, the registered manager's assessment had not captured the decision-making about how staff would manage the competing needs of the children living in the home. However, this did not have an impact on the well-being or safety of the children.

When children move into the home, they are well supported. For example, before moving in, children and their family members can meet staff and visit the home. This helps to reduce any worries that children or their families may have. As a result, children settle quickly.

Children make good progress because of the individualised care and support that they receive from staff. The home is welcoming and comfortable. The manager has made improvements to the decoration of the home, and there is a plan for further decoration.

Children have trusting relationships with staff. Staff's approach to care is consistent and nurturing. Children talk positively about their experience of living in the home. They talk about the staff feeling like a family and feeling loved and cared for. These experiences help to create positive childhood memories.

Children are given lots of opportunities to have their say and influence the care they receive. For example, each month, an independent advocate visits the home to seek the views of children. However, staff do not always discuss children's care plans with them or capture their views in these documents.

Staff understand the importance of education. Children have full attendance in educational settings that are suited to their needs. As a result, children are making good progress. Staff work with the schools to support transitions and reintegration to school. Education staff say that communication with the home's staff is good.

The staff in the home are passionate about seeing children have fun and creating happy memories for them. Children take part in a variety of activities. These include playing in the home's sensory room, visiting theme parks, having group music lessons and enjoying a holiday to the seaside. These activities help children to develop relationships with staff and each other.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills at a level appropriate to their understanding. Children at the home have independence planners. One child is

encouraged to plan and cook her own meals, and another is supported in tidying his toys. Children benefit from this individualised support.

Children's experiences and achievements are celebrated and recognised by staff. Children each have a memory box containing photos and memorabilia of their time spent in the home. This helps to develop children's identity, self-esteem and confidence.

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

Children in the home say that they feel safe. Staff understand children's known risks and what actions they need to take to keep children safe. However, some risk assessments could more accurately reflect the strategies in place to protect children. These include how staff manage the risks associated with children using mobile phones and the internet. Despite this recording shortfall, the safety of children has not been compromised.

Staff have the required skills, knowledge and experience to safeguard children. In addition to mandatory safeguarding training, staff have completed additional training provided by the local safeguarding team. This has given staff increased confidence and understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe.

Staff support children to develop the skills to protect themselves. For example, where appropriate, children are provided guidance and advice on internet safety, healthy relationships and sexual health.

Staff reward and praise children to promote their positive behaviour. As a result, children understand the rules and boundaries. Physical interventions are not required often. When such interventions occur, the registered manager acts to review the appropriateness of the intervention and to identify and to identify any learning points.

The registered manager ensures that staff who are recruited to work in the home are subject to all necessary checks. This helps to ensure that staff who work at the home are suitable to do so.

Medication is safely stored and administered. Staff consult with health professionals when changes are required, for example changing the dose and type of medication. This improves well-being for children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager uses monitoring systems to review the quality of care provided to children. In the main, the registered manager has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas of weakness. However, in some instance this monitoring could have been more robust. For example, an incident of self-harm was not reviewed in a timely manner by the registered manager. Although this did not

affect the safety of the child, this delay highlights a vulnerability in the registered manager's monitoring systems. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to understand the quality of care and to develop practice.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have shown resilience and a commitment to children. This has lessened the influence that the pandemic has had on children, and they have continued to be looked after by familiar staff.

Staff are well supported by the registered manager and receive the support, guidance and training they need to meet children's needs. However, required policies and procedures are not all in place, including those relating to self-harm, missing from home, and bullying. This means that there is a potential for inconsistencies to emerge in how staff respond to incidents involving such behaviours.

The home's statement of purpose is not up to date. For example, the statement of purpose refers to door alarms on children's bedroom doors. These devices are not in operation.

## 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 children’s views, wishes and feeling standard requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff ascertain and consider each child’s views, wishes and feelings and balance these against what they judge to be in the child’s best interests when making decisions about the child’s care and welfare. (Regulation 7 (2) (a)(i))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children understand their placement plans and are supported in providing feedback on these.</p>	26 October 2021
<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 that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that the children’s risk assessments are clear and that assessments completed before children move into the home consider the compatibility of children’s needs.</p>	26 October 2021
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p>	26 October 2021

<p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(h))</p> <p>This particularly relates to the manager ensuring that monitoring systems are used effectively to improve the care provided.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (5))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that the statement of purpose reflects the care that is being provided.</p>	26 October 2021

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure there are specific policies setting out arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect and specific procedures to prevent children going missing and take action if they do. The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home, e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's home's regulations including the quality standards', page 44. Paragraph 9.19)

## 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:** SC039900

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

**Registered provider address:** Council House, Priory Road, Dudley DY1 1HF

**Responsible individual:** Wendi Grizzle

**Registered manager:** Mark Bates

## **Inspector**

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021