

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's manager has been registered with Ofsted since April 2009.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 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: 14 September 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/09/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
02/10/2018	Full	Good
18/12/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

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

Staff are passionate about creating happy memories with children. Children take part in a variety of activities, including attending local youth clubs, enjoying Halloween parties and spending holidays at the seaside. These experiences help children develop friendships and have fun.

Children are attending education full time and are making good progress. In addition, staff promote learning opportunities in the home. Each child has an independence skills plan that is devised to go at a pace that suits them. For example, one child is supported to understand budgets and another child is learning how to clean their teeth. This practice supports children to develop skills and creates an environment where learning is encouraged.

Staff support children to attend routine appointments and seek external support to ensure that health needs are met. However, written plans are not always clear about how staff should respond to children's specific health needs. For example, one child's epilepsy plan gives clear strategies that school staff should take but fails to provide guidance for staff in the home. While this has had no impact, it can lead to inconsistencies in practice and does not provide clear guidance. During the inspection, the manager took immediate action to address this shortfall by reviewing the plan and sharing this with the child's clinician.

Staff support children to see their loved ones. Staff are flexible in supporting arrangements and provide activities and transport, and welcome family members into the home. Staff also ensure that family members receive regular updates about their child's experiences, including phone calls, emails and pictures. This ensures that family members are involved in children's care planning and that important relationships are maintained.

Children's transitions are child-focused and carefully planned. Children due to move in, and their family members, are given the opportunity to visit the home and staff ensure that their views are considered. In addition, staff play an active role in supporting children who are moving to new homes. For example, staff created a 'my story' booklet for one child which explained the child's journey and identified areas where she needed continued support. This practice helps to reduce any anxieties and supports new relationships.

The home provides a warm and welcoming environment. Since the last inspection, children's rooms have been personalised and children now have the opportunity to look after pet guinea pigs. This ensures that children feel a sense of belonging and that they feel comfortable in the home.

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

Staff understand children's known risks and what actions they are expected to take to keep children safe. Children's written risk assessments include clear guidance for staff about how they should respond to risk. In addition, the manager has spent time with children's parents and their previous carers to understand effective risk reduction strategies. As a result, staff have an informed understanding about children's behaviours.

Incidents in the home are rare. Since the last inspection, there has been one physical intervention. When physical intervention is used, records are detailed and children and staff are given the opportunity to reflect with the manager. This helps to maintain relationships and ensures the manager has appropriate oversight of children's experiences in the home.

Staff encourage positive behaviours and use incentives effectively. When one child struggled to return to school after the summer break, staff introduced a sticker chart, which encouraged him to attend. In addition, the manager now spends time with children explaining their written risk management plans. This provides children with the opportunity to share their views and identify areas where they would like more support.

Staff and managers follow approved medication protocols. Managers ensure that the arrangements for the safekeeping, administration and storage of medication are effective.

Since the last inspection, the manager has reviewed the home's policy on door monitors on children's bedrooms and these are no longer in use. However, the manager has failed to consider the impact of having CCTV on the external door. This is used without sufficient assessment and outside the home's operating policy. This means that the surveillance may be used unnecessarily.

Health and safety is monitored effectively. Regular fire drills are conducted, with all children and staff aware of the procedures to follow. Regular servicing and maintenance of equipment take place. This practice helps to ensure that children live in a physically safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has relevant experience for the role and is supported by a qualified and experienced deputy. Both managers are passionate and committed to developing good practice in the home.

The staff group in the home is stable and children benefit from consistency. Staff say they enjoy working in the home and feel valued. As a result, children have the opportunity to build meaningful relationships.

The manager has well-established working relationships with a range of external professionals. Their feedback highlighted effective communication, as well as committed and nurturing care. One professional said, 'Staff are brilliant, they are fantastic advocates for children and communication is great.'

There is a well-organised training programme in place. The managers ensure that staff complete specialist training in line with children's needs. For example, staff have benefited from training in managing epilepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Training provides staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide safe care to children.

Staff are provided with regular reflective supervisions and annual appraisals. These consider how staff are working with children and any improvements that can be made. However, the registered manager has not received supervision in line with the home's policy.

Records written by staff are generally of good quality. However, on occasions, the language used is institutional. The manager had already identified this shortfall and said there are plans to review the recording templates used by staff.

The home's workforce development plan does not meet regulation. The current plan does not provide information about the staff structure, training and timescales for staff inductions. Consequently, the expectations for staff are not clear.

The quality of care report provides a good overview of the progress that children have made. However, the manager has failed to reflect on consultation with families, staff and children. As a result, the review fails to demonstrate how vital feedback shapes the development of the care provided to children.

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 health and well-being standard is that—</p> <p>the health and well-being need’s of children are met;</p> <p>children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff help each child to—</p> <p>understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding.</p> <p>(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children’s health plans clearly reflect their health needs and provide staff with strategies to support children’s health needs.</p>	<p>27 December 2022</p>
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children.</p> <p>(Regulation 24 (1)(a))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that CCTV is only used in line with the home’s policy and with sufficient assessment.</p>	<p>27 December 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the workforce plan includes information about staff training, timescales for induction and detail of how poor performance is managed or improved. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the manager receives supervision of their practice, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and that information about the child is recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that there is a system in place which allows the manager to monitor the matters set out in regulation at least once every six months. The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home and the impact care is having on outcomes for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

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

Responsible individual: Wendi Grizzle

Registered manager: Mark Bates

Inspectors

Sophie Hills, Social Care Inspector

Glenis Staiger-Grant, Social Care Inspector

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