

# 1273497

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home provides short breaks for seven children with learning disabilities. The home is one of four homes run by this local authority children's trust.

The registered manager has managed this home for many years and is suitably qualified and experienced.

**Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 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 **outstanding**

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

**Date of last inspection:** 28 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/11/2019	Full	Good
19/03/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

Children love visiting the home for their short-break stay. Introductions to short breaks are planned and move at a pace that suits the child and their family. A parent said, 'The staff are very professional and always willing to help. [Name of child] enjoys his short breaks.' Children make progress at the home. Progress is captured in photos and is shared and celebrated with children and their families.

Welcome meetings are held at the start of each short break. Creative and flexible methods are used to support children's engagement. A record of these meetings is made using an accessible format of signs, colours and photos. Consequently, children can take part in planning their breaks.

The staff are innovative in ways of working with children. They have developed a mascot character to support children with participation, access to complaints procedures, and learning about diversity and about keeping themselves safe, for example, road safety and online safety.

Children have fun during their short breaks. They enjoy a range of activities at the home and go out for leisure activities, such as to the park and on trips to the seaside. The home has been set up to give children communal areas where they can spend time socialising and smaller lounge areas for when they choose to be alone in a quieter space.

One parent describes the short breaks as a lifeline. Progress that their child has made through the 'steppingstones' approach is also seen when he goes home. As a result, his independence skills are developing.

Staff communicate with other professionals about the needs of the child. This gives a consistent approach to care across home, school and the short-break setting. For example, in relation to children's communication needs, action is taken to ensure that the child can access their familiar and preferred communication tools during short-breaks stays.

The home is kept to a good standard. Maintenance work was being undertaken during the inspection. This was done while children were at school and workers had cleaned up in time for children to arrive home. Their short-break stay was not disrupted. Although a bathroom was being refitted, alternative options for personal care were available.

There is an overall ethos of full inclusion and opportunities for participation for all children.

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

Children are safe and protected from harm because the staff know them well. The manager and staff are instrumental in identifying risks to children. Staff are kind, gentle and attentive. As a result, children thrive in a nurturing and safe environment.

Children do not go missing from the home. However, care is taken to ensure that pen pictures are available with information about children in the event that they go missing.

Children benefit from high staffing ratios, with staff who are skilled and knowledgeable in how to keep them safe. Children are matched well with other children with similar needs. Group matching is a strength. Children have positive experiences with others despite the challenges they face. As a result, children rarely need to be restrained.

Staff understand each child's vulnerabilities. They implement clear boundaries that are effective in helping children manage their behaviour and emotions. The staff are subtle in their approach. This helps children to remain calm and to be redirected easily when they become distressed. A staff member said, '[Name of child] is now much more settled. Previous behaviours shown are not seen any more.'

Children know how to tell staff when they feel unsafe. The introduction of a mascot help children to raise complaints. Children are now able to share grumbles, which are taken seriously and acted upon.

Recruitment is safe. The manager ensures that all applicants are subject to thorough recruitment checks before they begin working in the home. This keeps children safe from unsuitable people having access to them.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The home is managed by a long-standing, experienced registered manager. She is suitably qualified in the management and care of children in residential care. The registered manager is aspirational, highly motivated, dedicated and passionate in raising standards and delivering positive outcomes for children.

Managers and the staff team go above and beyond to ensure that children and their families receive help through short-break stays. They offer an extended arm to help parents when difficulties arise, for example, going to a parent's home to help the child to get on the school bus. A parent said, 'They are amazing people. They have helped me out with other things too. It has made a huge difference to me and my life.'

The manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Staff understand the targets set and work effectively towards delivering them. For example, Makaton

training for staff and communication for children using a mascot are exceptional. The manager monitors progress effectively and keeps track of each child's journey.

Staff receive excellent supervision, training and induction. This ensures that they continue to develop their skills and knowledge while supplying good-quality care.

Regardless of children's disability, they can contribute to sharing their views, wishes and feelings because staff are highly skilled in their ability to communicate with children using their preferred method of communication. As a result, children make requests about how they can improve the short-break service and are encouraged to share their views at the welcome meetings.

Monitoring and review by the manager are highly effective. Records are streamlined and clearly track monitoring and progress. Shortfalls are found and action plans are put in place. This continued monitoring and review ensure that the service continues to provide children with positive short-break experiences.

Partnership working is a real strength. The managers and staff work well together and share good practice with parents and schools. This improves children's experiences and development.

## **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:** 1273497

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

**Registered provider:** Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

**Registered provider address:** Birmingham Children's Trust, Third Floor, Zone 16,  
1 Lancaster Circus, Birmingham B4 7DJ

**Responsible individual:** Melanie Page

**Registered manager:** Julie Clark

## Inspectors

Michelle Spruce, Social Care Inspector

Alison Snell, Social Care Inspector

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