

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 up to seven children with learning disabilities at any one time. The home is one of four homes run by this local authority children's trust.

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/12/2022	Full	Good
28/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
12/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The service is currently providing support to 21 children and their families. Each child has an individual package of support which includes overnight stays. At the time of the inspection, three children were receiving overnight short-break care.

Children flourish in this home because of the excellent care they receive from a committed and enthusiastic staff team. Research-informed practice helps staff to provide the children with nurturing and sensitive care in line with their individual needs.

The registered manager and the staff have worked hard to create a warm and welcoming environment for the children. The home is bright, spacious and comfortably furnished. Photos of the children and the staff are displayed throughout the home. Children's bedrooms are wonderfully decorated with themes, such as football, cars and space. Many of the children have a favourite bedroom and staff take great care to accommodate children's preferences when they stay overnight. This means that this is an environment where children can have fun and feel comfortable and where they want to spend time.

Children have developed amazing relationships with the staff. The staff know the children exceptionally well and have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their needs. Staff are nurturing, attentive and kind to the children. This helps the children to build trusting relationships with staff.

Staff are attuned to the children's differing communication styles. Staff use a variety of different communication tools, such as Makaton, symbols and social stories. They work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that children are provided with a consistent approach in line with their communication needs. During the inspection the inspector observed the children communicating with the staff using their preferred communication style.

Children have lots of fun during their short breaks. They enjoy a range of activities at the home and in the community, including trips to museums, trampoline parks, farms and parks. At the start of each short break, welcome meetings are held with the children. Staff use creative methods to support the children to take part in the planning of their short-break stay. One parent said their child has been able to take part in activities they would not have been able to do at home.

The independence work undertaken with children is a real strength of this home. Staff support the children to develop their confidence and skills through individual independence plans. For example, one child has become confident in the kitchen and is now able to prepare their lunch. The child's social worker said this is a remarkable achievement for the child. Another child is now able to sit at the table

and use cutlery to eat their meals. The children's achievements are celebrated with them and their families through praise and certificates.

The children have recently been part of a community initiative where they welcomed professional footballers into the home. As part of their visit, the children taught the footballers to communicate using Makaton. One child who wanted to teach all professional footballers Makaton was then invited to a special event where part of her wish came true and she was able to coach football professionals. This was not only an amazing experience for the child but it also provided her with a great sense of achievement.

The registered manager has worked hard to include the children's families in the short-break service. The introduction of play-and-stay sessions has enabled parents to spend time in the home. One parent said the sessions have helped her to feel part of a community.

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

Staff work hard to provide children with a safe and supportive environment. Staff have a good understanding of the children's behaviours and vulnerabilities and, as a result, children develop strong and trusting relationships with the staff who care for them.

Since the last inspection, there have been no significant safeguarding incidents. Staff have a good understanding of the risks to children and are clear about how to respond should they have any concerns for a child's safety or well-being.

Children's safety is the priority for staff. Children have detailed care plans that outline their needs and risks. These provide staff with guidance about how to care for children and keep them safe. Plans set out the required level of supervision for each child. However, two children's plans did not include that monitors are used at night. This shortfall was addressed by the manager and the plans were updated.

Children have not gone missing from the home during their short breaks. The risk of children going missing is considered and pen pictures are available with information about each child, in case they go missing. Staff are clear about what action to take should a child go missing during their short-break stay.

Staff rarely use physical holds to manage behaviour. On the occasions that this is necessary, children are supported to understand the reason why they are held. Staff and children benefit from discussions to help prevent future occurrences. The registered manager has oversight of all incidents, which helps to ensure that any holds used are appropriate and safe for the children.

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made by children. However, children know how to make a complaint. The registered manager has created a mascot to help children to raise complaints. The mascot is used in several ways to ensure that children's voices are heard.

Medication systems and processes are managed safely. Staff receive the necessary training and assessments to ensure they are confident and competent in medication processes.

The registered manager ensures that all the necessary recruitment checks are carried out before new staff come to work at the home. This means that children benefit from having staff working with them who have been safely vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a highly motivated, dedicated and determined registered manager. She is supported by a skilled, experienced and suitably qualified management team. Staff describe the management team as approachable and supportive.

The home has a stable and committed core staff team. Many of the staff have worked at the home for several years. The staff are child-focused and enthusiastic about creating positive experiences for the children.

The registered manager has comprehensive knowledge of the home's strengths and areas for development. She has thorough monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff provide consistent, positive and child-centred care which enables children to flourish during their short breaks.

Staff receive regular professional supervision and appraisal. This ensures that staff practice and development are continually monitored and that staff have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and how they can further develop the children's care to support their progress.

Research-based practice means that staff are well informed and have the right knowledge to keep children safe. The registered manager shares relevant research and guidance to raise the staff's awareness of emerging good practices relevant to promoting the welfare of the children accessing the service.

Staff have completed a wide range of training to inform their practice and equip them to meet the children's individual and diverse needs. Many staff hold the required level 3 diploma. A small number of staff are currently working to achieve the award, and plans are in place to ensure completion within the required timescales. In addition, the registered manager has supported senior staff members to take their level 5 diploma. For one member of staff, this has been particularly beneficial as she used her knowledge to confidently advocate and challenge for a child who was transferring to adult services.

Partnership work with external agencies is excellent. A common theme in the feedback from professionals is the positive communication and outstanding care provided to children. One social worker said that the home is 'doing a great job', and another said they 'wished more children would access the service'.

Parents and carers speak highly of the service. One parent said they would not know where they would be without it. Another parent described the service as 'their lifeline'.

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: 1 Avenue Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 4DU

Responsible individual: Melanie Page

Registered manager: Julie Clark

Inspector

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

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