

# 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 manager registered with Ofsted in 2009 and is suitably qualified and experienced.

At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home. All children were present during the inspection and spoke to the inspector.

### Inspection dates: 26 and 27 February 2025

**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:** 2 August 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
02/08/2023	Full	Good
22/11/2022	Full	Good
14/09/2021	Full	Good
19/11/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

## Inspection judgements

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

The home is warm and welcoming and has a family feel. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere that is full of warmth and love. The children's bedrooms and the living areas of the home resonate with a sense of individuality, achievement and special interests. Staff have nurtured children's interests particularly well, creating spaces for them such as a sensory room, arts and crafts room, cinema room and a DJ room. Children personalise their bedrooms and this allows them to take a sense of pride in their home and promotes their well-being.

Children receive good-quality care that makes them feel valued and secure. The staff demonstrate dedicated commitment to them. Children living in this home have made significant and meaningful progress from their starting points. Relationships between staff and children are warm, affectionate and loving. Staff are continually curious about, and reflect on, how they can help children grow in all areas of their development. This helps children to build trust and to feel safer and relaxed in their surroundings.

Children's health needs are expertly addressed. The staff work in partnership with medical professionals effectively and respond to the evolving care needs of the children. Staff are able to use information and guidance alongside research to help them to modify their practice for the benefit of the children. This enables the children to have stability, security and consistent care from a team that fully understands the children's needs.

Staff understand how children communicate their needs. Staff are creative and use a range of resources to ascertain children's wishes and feelings. Staff make every effort and dedicate an immeasurable amount of time to attain the opinions of the children. Staff listen to the children's views and act on the choices they make. Children learn to extend their verbal vocabulary and use tools such as symbols and objects of reference. They use them to choose the activities they want to do, the food they want to eat and how they want to relax.

All children access education that is appropriate to their individual needs and have excellent attendance. The children are making good progress in all aspects of their education. Effective links and regular communication with children's schools ensure that staff understand children's progress in school and can support them well at home.

Children are supported to develop independence skills at a pace that suits their needs and abilities. They develop skills, such as being able to attend to their personal care, withdraw money from a cashpoint machine, use the self-service checkout at the shops and complete laundry tasks, to name a few. These opportunities enable children to take on appropriate levels of responsibility to develop life skills for the future. These skills are supporting one child to have a well-planned transition out of the home to supported living in the near future.

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

Managers and staff are clear about their responsibilities to protect children. Staff understand the child protection policy and know how to report a safeguarding concern.

Managers have an effective system for recording, reporting and monitoring safeguarding concerns. Communication with external professionals is effective. Managers share information with them swiftly to avoid delay and ensure that children are protected from harm. Managers take guidance from these professionals, and they work together to ensure that children are safe.

The positive relationships that managers and staff form with the children are a significant protective factor in helping to keep them safe. As a result, incidents of restraint are rare. When these have occurred, staff physically intervene when children become unsettled and show behaviours that place themselves or others at risk of harm. Staff understand the reasons behind children's unwanted behaviour and provide good support to children afterwards. This helps children to move on from the incident. The manager provides scrutiny of all incidents and measures of control to ensure that their use is fair and proportionate. Good management oversight and prompt action to address issues mean that children are treated fairly and stay safe.

Managers and staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of children's vulnerabilities and potential risks posed to them. Clear guidance and strategies to follow are recorded in written risk assessments. This awareness is embedded in the staff's day-to-day work, which reduces and minimises the risks for children. Staff are directed in how to manage and mitigate the risks identified for each child. Observations show that staff are highly skilled in diversion, distraction and de-escalation, which demonstrates that the strategies identified are being used and are effective. This helps ensure that children are protected from harm. There has been a missed opportunity when one child's risk assessment does not give direction to staff to support the child about how to keep themselves safe online. The manager has taken prompt action to rectify this during the inspection.

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

The manager is passionate and child-focused, and children are at the centre of everything he does. The manager has created an open and inclusive culture that places children at the centre of practice. He values and promotes good teamwork. As a result, children build positive relationships with the staff, whose skilled and caring practice increases the bonds between them.

The manager has high expectations and aspirations for children. The staff share the manager's vision, which is demonstrated through the culture and ethos of the home. This ensures that children receive good-quality care from a dedicated and ambitious team of staff.

There is a longstanding and consistent staff team in post. Children benefit from this due to the continuity of care that they receive. Most of the staff hold the required qualification in residential childcare. A small number of staff are currently working to achieve this, and plans are in place to ensure that they complete this within the required timescales. Staff are provided with a wide range of training that informs their practice and meets children's individual and diverse needs.

The manager has established strong connections with partner agencies. Professionals are positive about the communication with the team and about the care provided for children. One social worker told the inspector, 'I really can't praise them highly enough for the support they have given [child's name]. They feel like they now belong to a family and feel wanted. Their voice is heard, and they are heavily involved in their care planning.'

Staff speak about the children with love, warmth and enthusiasm. Staff are enormously committed to children. Staff love working in the home and feel supported by managers. One member of staff said, 'He is so supportive. There isn't anything he wouldn't do for any of the team or the children.'

Managers' monitoring systems are embedded into practice, which ensures that they have a good oversight of the home and take action to address issues as they arise. This comprehensive oversight makes sure that all aspects of care and the running of the home are maintained to a good standard. This better assists the manager to identify concerns and make prompt changes to improve and maintain good standards of care for children.

All staff now receive regular supervision sessions, when important issues are tracked and discussed. Children are at the centre of practice. Team meeting discussions are reflective and provide a comprehensive overview of the progress made by children. This allows all staff an opportunity to discuss children's progress, generate ideas and have a consistent approach to the care provided.

## **What does the children's home need to do to improve? Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

## **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:** Salahdin Thirlway

**Registered manager:** Mark Bates

## **Inspector**

Marianne Grandfield, Social Care Inspector

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