

1233310

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large charitable organisation. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and have learning disabilities.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2024.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 September 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 7 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/11/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2022	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Full	Good
16/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children living at the home have lived together for a couple of years and are making progress. However, due to a funding dispute with a local authority, the senior managers decided to give notice on one child's placement. They have since withdrawn this as the issue has now been resolved.

One child has recently moved from the home after being there for five years. The child has made progress, and the manager ensured that there was a comprehensive plan in place to meet the child's needs. Through social stories, visiting their new home on several occasions and meeting their new staff, the child was prepared. The child has moved on successfully and is settling into their new home.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's complex health needs. They are working closely with other professionals to support the children to manage lifelong conditions. However, the manager did not ensure that a child who suffered the effects of sunburn for a length of time received appropriate medical advice.

Children have developed trusting relationships with staff, who understand their needs. Staff have a good understanding of each child's method of communication and always consider their views. Staff support children to develop their communication verbally and through using the Picture Exchange Communication System. This enables children to make day-to-day decisions about their lives.

Children attend school regularly and are making progress. There is good daily communication between staff at the home and staff at the children's schools. This provides children with consistency. As a result, they are settled and enjoy going to school.

Children are supported to have positive family time. They spend time with their families, and they have an opportunity to video call them each day. This ensures that children continue to develop and sustain close relationships with the people who are most important to them.

Children have access to a variety of activities in the home and the local community. They are given choices, and their interests are considered. This includes visits to the park, zoo, cinema, bowling alley and amusement park. One child has a fascination with planets and so the staff took them to a deep-space radio observatory, which the child enjoyed. The children recently went on a holiday in a caravan, which gives children positive shared memories.

Staff celebrate children's achievements and have created memory books full of photos of the children attending activities. Children also have a scrapbook that is full of their artwork and creative drawings, which they regularly look through.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children receive a high level of supervision and support in line with their assessed needs. Physical intervention techniques are used when necessary to protect children from causing themselves harm. However, staff do not always record each staff member's role and the duration of the hold. The manager has also not ensured that children are spoken to after a hold so that they understand why this was necessary to keep them safe. There is also a lack of management oversight of the records to enable staff to learn from the incident.

Children's risk assessments and behaviour support plans address their vulnerabilities and include clear strategies for staff to follow. The risks identified are understood and are managed by staff. Support and care provided by staff help children to stay safe. There have been no missing-from-home incidents.

Staff are calm and nurturing to children. They are caring and attentive to each child's needs and have a good understanding of each child's behaviour. Staff use calming strategies identified in the children's individual behaviour support plans.

Staff understand the children's emotional and communication needs. This allows staff to quickly identify when children are unhappy, and staff communicate with them so that their concerns are addressed.

When concerns have been raised about the behaviour of staff, swift action has been taken to address this. Staff have been removed from duty while an investigation has taken place. The manager ensured that all appropriate people were informed. As a result, children have been safeguarded effectively and there has been appropriate scrutiny of practice.

The home environment is child friendly, clean and tidy. There are age-appropriate toys and games, and a sensory room which children enjoy spending time in. Parts of the home have recently been replastered to fix holes in the walls but have not yet been repainted, which detracts from the warm and welcoming environment the manager is trying to create. Also, there is a smell of urine in one child's bedroom.

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

There has been a change in management, which has had an impact on the management oversight of the day-to-day running of the home. The current registered manager is experienced, child centred and knows the children well. A new manager has recently been appointed. He is working alongside the registered manager before he takes on full management responsibility for the home. Together, they are developing plans to

improve the day-to-day running of the home, but this has not consistently been embedded into practice.

The management team has not yet ensured that there are clear systems in place to quickly identify any shortfalls in the plans for children or other relevant documentation. The education plans and court orders are not kept up to date and do not reflect the children's changing needs.

The registered manager has carried out a detailed review of the quality of care, which includes feedback from the children, parents and professionals. However, she has not included the feedback from staff. This is a missed opportunity to fully assess the care being provided to children.

There is now a core group of staff, which provides consistency for the children. There is a strong ethos of teamworking, and staff said that they feel supported. Staff are encouraged to play an active role by taking on extra responsibilities. This gives them shared ownership, builds their confidence and supports their development.

There is a range of core training and specialised training available to staff to help them meet children's needs. All training is up to date. New staff receive a thorough induction that provides them with a detailed programme of training and guidance in their new role. However, the manager has not ensured that staff have attained their qualifications within the required time frames.

Supervision sessions follow an in-depth agenda, covering all appropriate areas. However, the manager has not ensured that these sessions are regularly carried out with staff. This does not allow staff an opportunity to develop their practice and identify any learning needs. Also, not all staff have received an annual appraisal. This requirement was raised at the last inspection and has not been met.

Staff have regular team meetings. This gives the team an opportunity to come together, reflect and share information effectively. This ensures that staff are consistent in meeting children's needs.

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, The 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
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child. details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	17 November 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that factual recordings of restraints used include a clear description of the hold and management oversight. The registered person must also ensure that the child is spoken to after any incidents of restraint so that they understand why the hold was necessary.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is adequate management oversight of the home. The registered person must also ensure that they have systems in place so that all staff receive regular supervision which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. This requirement has been restated.	17 November 2024
The health and well-being standard is that—	17 November 2024

the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children receive advised medical treatment when they have suffered an injury, such as severe sunburn.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) The registered person must ensure that issues of maintenance in the home are addressed. This specifically relates to the urine smell in a child’s bedroom.	17 November 2024

The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that a child’s case records contain up-to-date information about the child’s educational progress and court orders.	17 November 2024
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have attained their qualifications within the appropriate time frames.	17 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This specifically relates to ensuring clearer recording when completing incident reports. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that they have a system in place that allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulations at least every six months. This should include feedback from staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are given an opportunity to have their performance appraised each year to address any practice issues. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 1233310

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Registered provider address: Birtenshaw Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton BL7 9AB

Responsible individual: David Reid

Registered manager: Sarah Shepherd

Inspectors

Simon Jones, Social Care Inspector
Kitty Wiper, 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024