

1266267

Registered provider: Progress Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. It provides residential short breaks for children with learning and/or physical disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, 53 children were accessing short breaks at the home. Children attend for short breaks in small groups of up to 6 children.

On the first day of this inspection, 6 children were having short breaks. The inspector spent time with five of the children.

The registered manager holds a permanent position and is suitably experienced and qualified.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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 effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2025	Full	Outstanding
23/01/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
15/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Overall, staff provide good-quality and consistent care to children during their short breaks.

Children receive carefully planned introductions to the service based on their individual needs. As a result, they settle in well, and parents and carers quickly build trust in the staff's ability to care for their children. When children's breaks come to an end, managers and staff work effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals to plan for their futures. For example, when children move into adult services or full-time care, the staff are integral to the transition planning for these changes.

Managers and staff maintain good communication with children's parents and carers, making contact before each short break and providing feedback following their child's stay. Leaders ensure that changes to children's plans are communicated to the staff. As a result, staff thoroughly understand children's needs and are well informed about any changes or new information. Managers and staff are sensitive to parents' and carers' needs and circumstances and will provide emotional support and advice.

Staff are skilled in communicating with children and helping them make choices. They understand children's methods of communication and ensure that resources such as symbols and 'now and next' boards are readily available and in use. As a result, children understand the choices available to them and their expected routines for the day. This reduces children's anxieties about being away from home.

Staff help children make progress and enhance their independence skills. Children have individual targets in place. Children's progress is celebrated with great enthusiasm. Managers and staff liaise with parents and carers when setting targets. This increases consistency and progress that extends beyond the short-break setting to enhance children's daily lives, such as progress in communication or personal care.

Staff provide care to children that promotes their dignity. Furthermore, staff help children manage their privacy and dignity. For example, staff have reinforced appropriate boundaries around undressing and used a social story to aid a child's understanding. As a result, the child has a greater understanding of needing to remain clothed when in public places, which has increased their social opportunities and access to activities.

Staff are confident and eager to help children enjoy a range of activities and outings. They are creative in involving children in celebrating cultural events. This involves collaborating with the organisation's other services for special events, such as a summer barbecue and Black History Month event. This enriches the children's experiences.

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

Staff prioritise children's safety and understand their risks and vulnerabilities. Staff help children learn about keeping themselves safe. They consistently reinforce appropriate boundaries with children, verbally and using social stories. For example, they help children understand the importance of using their 'kind hands' and not hurting others. This aids children's learning.

The care and nurture that staff provide helps children manage their emotions. Staff understand and use appropriate strategies to support children in reducing self-injurious behaviours. Staff only physically intervene with children's behaviours when necessary to ensure their safety. The manager has detailed oversight of all incidents, speaks with staff to identify any learning, and ensures that children receive appropriate support.

Any allegations made by children are taken seriously, and relevant action is taken. This includes helping children repair relationships with staff, where necessary. Staff talk with children to help them learn about the seriousness of allegations. As a result, for some children, this has reduced the number of allegations they make and helped them understand why it is important to be truthful.

Staff usually provide care and supervision for children in line with their plans. However, there are some occasions when this has not been consistent, and poor practice by staff has reduced the quality of children's experiences. For example, on one occasion, a child was harmed by another child because staff failed to provide supervision in line with their plans. There have been rare occasions when staff's lack of supervision has left children at risk of harm. Furthermore, staff have not consistently followed the home's policies in relation to safeguarding children.

However, when concerns arise about staff practice, managers take them very seriously. They are diligent in carrying out full investigations and taking prompt action to safeguard children. Staff are subjected to disciplinary action if their practice falls short of the expected standard. Managers have a proactive approach and a commitment to continually upskilling staff in safeguarding and embedding this into the culture of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership and management at the home have strengthened. The manager is supported by two highly competent deputy managers and team leaders. The manager is dedicated to staff development and encourages their progression. As a result, staff feel valued.

The registered manager is highly organised and is an inspirational role model for the staff team. They spend quality time with the children and model a nurturing approach. Staff morale is extremely positive, which creates a happy atmosphere at the home where children laugh and have fun.

There is a consistent staff team at the home. Although there have been some changes, a core staff team has remained. All staff are trained in a breadth of topics, which prepares them well for their roles. This includes bespoke training to meet children's individual needs. New members of staff benefit from a high-quality introduction to working at the home. The organisation's learning and development team swiftly arranges relevant staff training for any new needs. There is a strong reflective and learning ethos at the home.

The team is confident in understanding and applying the home's model of care. This intentional approach is effective in enhancing children's engagement and helping them build relationships with staff. The manager has introduced additional research-based practice; more recently, staff have been trained in 'intensive interaction'. This approach has helped one child reduce their anxiety and spend time with others.

A high number of children access the home for short breaks. Managers and staff plan children's short breaks well. This includes careful consideration of the suitability and compatibility of children spending time together at the setting. This enhances children's enjoyment and safety. Furthermore, some children build positive peer relationships and enjoy shared activities and social opportunities.

The manager has exceptional oversight at the home; they are diligent in reviewing all information to constantly review the quality of care and ensure that all necessary actions are promptly addressed.

A strength of the service is the communication and partnership working with parents. One parent said, 'The managers and staff communicate brilliantly, and they are all so welcoming too.' Innovative approaches, such as a monthly questionnaire link, have been introduced to enhance opportunities to provide feedback to the service.

The service has held an open day for parents. This provided opportunities for parents to meet staff, hear more about children's experiences and share their feedback and ideas for the development of the service. Parents provided ideas about the qualities they think staff need to provide care for their children. This has been used to develop targeted interview questions for recruitment. The team has implemented other parental feedback, such as modifying the laundry system and rebooking a popular activity for the children.

The manager strives for continual development and improvement. As a result, children are safe and have thoroughly enjoyable experiences during their short breaks.

No requirements have been raised at this inspection.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff consistently adhere to the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children accessing the service. Everyone who works at the home must understand their role and responsibilities, as well as the decisions they are permitted to make on their own. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to identify and remain vigilant for any signs that might indicate a child is at risk of harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

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: 1266267

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Progress Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Progress House, 127 Millfields Road, Wolverhampton
WV4 6JG

Responsible individual: Tina Bhardwaj

Registered manager: Kimberley Williams

Inspector

Alison Snell, Social Care Inspector

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