

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 is operated by a local authority children's trust. It provides residential short breaks for children with learning disabilities. Children attend for short breaks in small groups of up to 7 children. There are currently 23 children accessing short breaks at this home.

There is a manager at the home who has been in post since December 2024. They have submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, there were 3 children having a short break on the first day, and 4 children on the second day. The inspector spent time with 3 children.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2025	Full	Good
28/02/2024	Full	Outstanding
06/12/2022	Full	Good
28/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children stay in a warm and homely environment. Children's bedrooms are themed with the children's favourite characters to reflect their personalities. Staff clearly value the importance of an environment that is respectful and kept to a high standard, with the children at its heart.

Children enjoy their short breaks and speak highly of the adults who care for them. They receive well-planned, holistic care from highly skilled staff, who are deeply committed to improving children's experiences and life chances. Staff work well with others to make sure that children are safe and happy when they come to stay. The home environment is lively and fun, and children access a range of opportunities to help them thrive both in the home and in the community.

Managers and staff collaborate closely with the local authority social workers, schools and families. This means that targets and developmental goals are well understood and that children receive consistent approaches. For example, one child is learning to use cutlery at mealtimes. Consistency across this child's home, school and short break means that the child is making progress in this area.

Staff speak to each child's parent or carer before each short break to ensure that they have all the current information to provide the best care for the children. Staff are well prepared to welcome children into the home, and children's photos are displayed outside their bedrooms, giving a sense of belonging. When children arrive, staff are nurturing and greet children with enthusiasm and warmth.

Families value this short-break service. Staff are empathetic and encouraging to parents and families, showing a genuine interest in the wellbeing of the whole family. Staff build positive and trusting relationships with parents and families, which means they are confident to entrust the care of children to them. One parent said: 'I have only got good things to say. They are our lifeline, I do not know where we would be without them. [name of home] is the only place I can send them where I can relax at home as I know they are safe and in good hands.'

Staff extend the care and support they provide to children and parents beyond the short breaks. This is through providing advice, planned support in the community and, on occasion, staff have supported parents in crisis situations.

Children enjoy a range of activities at the home and going out for trips and events. The activities children take part in are evaluated to identify the level of benefit and enjoyment. This is used in future planning to ensure that children gain the most enriching and enjoyable experiences during their short breaks. As a result, children's experiences are significantly broadened.

Staff help and encourage children to make small, gradual steps towards their individual goals, and children are making progress during their short breaks, for example cooking, spending time in the community or eating at the table. The independence skills children develop benefit them beyond the short-break setting and into their home life. Staff recognise and delight in children's progress and achievements. Staff capture these moments with certificates and photos that are taken home to share with their families.

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

Children are safeguarded effectively. The stable, consistent home environment, together with the warmth and confidence of the staff, makes the children feel safe and secure. Proactive steps are taken swiftly to minimise the risks and ensure that children have a positive experience when they stay. The manager completes regular behaviour and thought-mapping exercises with staff for individual children and shares their learning with relevant people. Communication methods, behaviour strategies and visual supports used at schools are also implemented at the home to provide consistency for the children. Parents and social workers say that children feel safe and that the staff protect them.

Children receive help from high staffing levels and there are clear behaviour support plans to support children's needs. Risks to children are well understood by managers and staff. Risk assessments are clear and detailed. The children's professional network and parents inform assessments to ensure that staff take the appropriate action when needed. There is a strong emphasis on implementing preventative strategies and consulting closely with schools and families to provide consistent care and support to children.

Staff support children to understand boundaries and routines. This is done in a child-friendly way, using the child's preferred method of communication. Incidents are well managed by staff and always reviewed by the manager. Challenging situations are discussed in team meetings to review if there are any lessons to be learned to improve future practice.

Social workers speak highly about the prompt and good level of communication they have with staff when issues arise that may have an impact on a child's wellbeing or safety. Records show that external agencies are promptly informed of any incidents to ensure that children are safeguarded during their stay.

The quality of the relationships that staff have with children is exemplary. Staff know the children extremely well and talk with great affection about them. The staff are attuned to their needs and responsive to changes in their presentation. Staff see the child first and look beyond the presenting behaviours, working hard to understand what the child is trying to communicate. Children build strong, trusting relationships with staff, who show patience, resilience and empathy in the care they provide. Staff are calm and

consistent in their approach. As a result, children seek out their company and interaction for sensory input and affection.

There has been one missed occasion when the manager has not notified Ofsted following a serious incident. The lack of information-sharing reduces the regulator's understanding of safety and quality of care in the home. This can weaken the safety oversight for children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is dedicated and passionate and advocates endlessly to ensure that children lead positive and fulfilling lives, despite their complex needs. The manager has excellent oversight of the home and understands the children's day-to-day experiences and the quality of care that they receive.

The manager has established a strong leadership team, which is integral to the effective running of the service. Leaders and managers all have clear roles and responsibilities, and each takes responsibility for an area of management oversight. As a result, management oversight at the home is extremely diligent.

Staff morale is high. Staff speak highly of the management team and the positive impact they have made. They feel well supported, valued and equipped to fulfil their roles. The staff team is very stable, and many of the staff have worked in the home for several years. Staff receive regular, child-focused supervision sessions. Supervision guides staff with a strong focus on their development. This helps to retain staff and enables them to provide excellent care to the children in the home.

Managers thoughtfully and carefully consider the compatibility of groups of children to maximise children's experiences and manage any potential risks. Managers are fully involved in the decision-making regarding which children and families receive a short break. The managers are part of a multi-agency decision-making process. Once children begin their short break, managers put a great emphasis on the suitability of children staying together. They know the importance of having a group of children who engage well together. This means that children's short breaks are more likely to be a positive experience.

There is effective partnership working with parents and professionals. This is enhanced by open days for parents to visit and for staff to share more about children's experiences and progress. This innovative idea is in its infancy, and there is an enthusiastic staff member taking a lead on planning the next event. One social worker told the inspector: 'I have nothing but praise for the service. My children love staying over, some don't want to leave. They go above and beyond to support children's transitions to ensure these are a positive experience.'

There is a real ethos of positivity at the home, and managers and staff are highly motivated to provide enriching experiences to children. The manager aspires for

continual development and improvement. Children have thoroughly enjoyable experiences during their short breaks.

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 notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— - a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; - an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; - there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; - a child protection enquiry involving a child— - is instigated; or - concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or - there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— - must include details of— - the matter; - the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and - any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	5 April 2026

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that Ofsted is notified of all serious events without delay.	
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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: Justine Bishop

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Marianne Grandfield, Social Care Inspector

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