

2548571

Registered provider: Worcestershire Children First

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was previously owned by the local authority. It was re-registered in October 2019 when the local authority moved to be a wholly owned limited company. It is registered to care for up to four children with learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder.

The home does not have a registered manager. At the time of the inspection, the manager had not submitted an application to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2023

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 **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 9 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/01/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/11/2021	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Two children were living in the home at the time of this inspection. Both children have lived in the home for a significant period of time. One child has had a positive transition out of the home.

The manager has acted to improve the internal aspects of the home and make it a homely place for children to live. Children's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their individual interests. The manager has plans in place to develop the garden area to ensure that it is a usable and pleasant space for children.

Children's relationships with staff are a strength of the home. Staff use creative ways to support children to talk about their emotions. There has been a noticeable improvement in one child's engagement with support. This is helping the child to develop new strategies to manage their emotions.

All the children are accessing appropriate education and are doing well. Staff work closely with children's educational providers and communicate regularly with them to ensure that children succeed. Staff promote educational activities outside of the classroom. This supports children's learning and helps them to reach their educational goals.

Staff take the time to understand the children's interests. They use this to plan activities that support children's social skills and enable them to learn and have fun. For example, one child attends youth groups in the local community, and another child regularly attends swimming lessons.

Children's relationships with their family are promoted by staff. Staff help children to stay in touch with their families and people who are important to them. This supports their identity and sense of belonging.

Children are supported to develop their independence in line with their age, understanding and ability. Children are making progress and are developing skills to do things more independently. Staff use creative ways to support children to engage with this. This makes learning fun and interesting.

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

Staff understand safeguarding procedures and know how to keep children safe. They have received suitable training and additional learning in this area, and are confident in knowing who to contact with concerns. Children's individualised risk assessments capture their needs and consider how staff are best placed to help children be safe. The documents are reviewed and kept up to date so that staff have all the information they need to keep children safe.

Staff use their knowledge of children to promote positive behaviour. When incidents occur, staff take effective action to help children to calm down and self-regulate. As a result, incidents have reduced, and the use of physical intervention is minimal. The manager's good oversight of incidents helps to identify learning and improve practice.

Concerns and allegations are taken seriously by managers and staff. When children make allegations, there is a robust response. Staff work in partnership with external agencies to ensure that the rights of children are protected and they are kept safe.

Arrangements for the safe storage, recording and administration of medication are in place. Children receive their medication when they need it. Medication is safely stored and well managed, to help children to manage their health needs.

A recent fire risk assessment has been completed by an external agency, and the manager has taken action to address most of the recommendations. However, a high-priority recommendation about fire doors remains outstanding, with no specific time frame in place for when the required works will be completed.

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

The manager has been in post for almost six months but, at the time of the inspection, has not applied to be registered with Ofsted. This means that Ofsted has not been able to formally assess his suitability for the role.

The manager is child focused, ambitious for the children, and wants the best for them. He has a good understanding of the children's experiences, personalities, needs and risks. Staff are complimentary of the manager and the changes that he has implemented in the home. The manager's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home has enabled him to prioritise and focus on improving the quality of care provided to children. This is supporting children's care planning and progress.

The staff receive regular supervision that is reflective and enables them to identify learning and development needs in line with the needs of the children. Staff were positive about their experience of supervision and the support that they receive.

The manager provides staff with relevant training and learning opportunities that help them to be effective in their role. When children have additional needs, such as medical needs, staff are provided with specific training. Staff are continuously developing their skills and knowledge. Children are cared for by staff who are skilled to meet their needs.

The manager has created robust monitoring tools to support him in his oversight of the home. A high level of monitoring and review of children's care takes place consistently. He regularly tracks and reviews the progress of each child, and sets actions, where needed, to support children's progress further.

Feedback from external stakeholders has been positive. The manager knows that it is essential to build strong working relationships, and this a pivotal part of safeguarding children and supporting their progress. A teacher commented that since the new manager has arrived 'things have improved enormously'. Additionally, a family member commented on the improved care, and said that the new manager has been a good advocate for the child.

The language that staff use in children's records is not always child focused. This is contradictory to the understanding and warmth that staff show when they talk about children. In addition, the language used in some records is sometimes unclear, and this means that children may not have an accurate narrative of their time at the home and how they are perceived by staff. The manager is aware of this issue and is working with staff to improve the quality of their recording.

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, 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
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) The provider must ensure that they address outstanding recommendations within fire risk assessments in reasonable time frames.	13 July 2023

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. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2548571

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Worcestershire Children First

Registered provider address: County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP

Responsible individual: Daniela Carson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Natasha Skinner, Social Care Inspector

Tara Weston, Social Care Inspector

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