

2549726

Registered provider: Worcestershire Children First

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides short breaks for children with learning disabilities and can care for up to four children on any one night.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in August 2022.

Inspection date: 3 July 2024

Date of last inspection: 22 May 2023

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

At the time of this inspection, three children were enjoying a short break at the home.

The manager is child-focused and passionate about providing good-quality care to children. He is proactive and has high expectations of himself and the staff team. His leadership has resulted in positive developments at the home and improved staff retention.

The interior of the home has had a fresh coat of paint, there are now canvas photos of children on the walls and the television is no longer contained in a cabinet. A sensory garden is a wonderful addition, with a large covered sandpit, wigwam and mud kitchen, along with a wildflower garden. These improvements have helped to create a warm and welcoming home and garden for children to enjoy.

Children enjoy their stays. Staff know the children well and plan a variety of activities at the home and in the community. Staff consider children's interests and likes. For example, children enjoy trips to the local parks and woods, going horse riding, shopping, on train journeys and swimming.

Despite children only having a few overnight stays at the home each month, staff support them to make progress with their independence, communication and social skills. Staff use a variety of learning opportunities and are creative in the ways they engage children.

Staff help children to have a voice. Children are helped using their individual communication tools to give feedback on their stays and make choices about the activities they want to do and the bedding they want for their bedroom. Children have requested things for the house and garden. These requests are listened to and where possible the manager has facilitated those requests. For example, children now have a swing in the soft playroom and a games machine in the lounge.

On occasions, staff have made mistakes when giving children their medication. These mistakes have not caused any harm to children. The manager has taken action to improve training for staff and ensure staff have competency assessments. As a result, there have not been any errors in the last four months.

When children require specialist support with their health needs, the manager makes sure staff have the appropriate training. In the absence of training, the manager has made sure health professionals are at the home to care for children while staff are trained.

Children do not go missing from the home. For one child who is at risk of wandering off, the manager has liaised with the local police to share relevant information. This will help to ensure swift action can be taken if the child was to leave the home.

On rare occasions, staff have needed to use physical intervention to keep a child safe. Staff have recorded details of the action taken. However, records of the discussion with the child and staff following the intervention are not sufficiently detailed. This limits any learning from the intervention.

Moves to and from the home are well planned. As a result, children new to the home settle quickly. Children who have left often keep in touch with regular phone calls.

The manager's monitoring of the home is effective. He has identified areas for development and taken action. For example, he has prioritised training to improve staff skills and knowledge, is working closely with adult services so that there are seamless moves for children who transition to adult services, has made improvements to the home environment and has developed closer links with the local additional needs school.

Staff and families speak highly of the manager, the changes he has made and how the children enjoy their stays.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/05/2023	Full	Good
31/08/2022	Full	Good
15/03/2022	Full	Good
23/11/2021	Full	Inadequate

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure records of restraint are kept to enable them and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. This includes making sure discussions and debriefs with children and staff are fully recorded so that this information can be included in the review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2549726

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: Stuart Hart

Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector

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