

# 2667746

Registered provider: Birchwood Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private company and provides care for up to five children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children with learning difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2022.

### Inspection dates: 31 May and 1 June 2023

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 28 February 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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 28/02/2023      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

There are currently two children living in the home.

Children are well supported when they move in and out of the home. Since the last inspection, one child has left the home and another child has moved in. The manager and staff ensure that introductions and moving-on plans are detailed and child-centred.

Staff establish positive links with parents and specialist services. As a result, important information is shared from the beginning of a child's placement to promote their needs. Furthermore, staff carefully consider the needs of any other children living in the home to ensure they are compatible. This is a key strength of the home.

The home is spacious, clean and bright. Improvements have been made to the home's decor. New soft furnishings have been purchased; this promotes a warm, homely feel. Children's bedrooms are creatively personalised to each child's preferences. Staff know the children well and the inspector observed staff's nurturing and warm responses to children.

Staff provide a wide range of activities. Children enjoy each other's company and are enjoying shared interests. This is expanding their experiences. Staff have sought and followed up children's suggestions for things they would like to, which has increased their sense of choice. For example, they have visited a funfair, gone to the zoo and a skateboarding park and taken part in pottery classes. Furthermore, staff have promoted healthy lifestyles, with children attending the local gym and being given other sporting opportunities.

Education is promoted by staff. One child who recently moved into the home has been supported to attend school on a regular basis. This is significant progress for this child, who has not been in education for some time. Staff help children with their reading, learning their times tables and homework.

Children are supported to see their families. The manager considers how best to plan and manage arrangements in the children's best interests. As a result, children spend positive time with the people who are important to them. Feedback from parents is complimentary. One parent said, 'Staff value my input as a parent and staff show real commitment to ensuring that [name of child] is at the centre of everything.'

Children's health and emotional well-being are prioritised. The children are registered with universal health services and staff have good oversight of their healthcare needs. Furthermore, all staff are suitably trained in specific health procedures to support children's complex needs.

Staff ask children about their views through 'have your say' forms, weekly meetings and daily conversations. However, the manager should ensure that children are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. A recommendation has been made to address this.

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

Safeguarding practice is effective. There is a high staffing ratio to support children and minimise the risk of harm. Additionally, staff have an understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities, and the potential risks they may be exposed to.

Children said that they felt safe and happy. There are good-quality key-work sessions taking place to help children understand the importance of keeping safe online. Additionally, staff understand how to report and respond well to all safeguarding concerns.

Safer recruitment checks are in place. However, the manager has not consistently followed the process. Not all checks have been completed to ensure that all staff provided a full employment history and relevant identity checks.

Since the last inspection, the quality of risk management plans has been significantly improved. When room searches are completed, these are done in a sensitive way and are appropriately recorded. The records clearly identify the potential risks and the reason action was taken, including any items removed.

Medication arrangements are robust and all medications are stored safely. Managers demonstrate good oversight by completing a weekly audit of the medication systems in place.

Fire practices in the home are safe. Each child has a personal emergency evacuation plan that provides staff with details of the support the child requires in the event of a fire. All staff are suitably trained in fire awareness, and children regularly take part in fire evacuations.

Staff manage the children's behaviour and avoid the use of consequences. When children struggle during times of distress, staff use a range of creative strategies to de-escalate situations by providing sensory stimulation. As a result, there have been no incidents that have required restraints. When incidents have taken place, these have been well managed and there is clear management oversight to reflect on staff practice and identify any lessons learned.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

There is a suitably qualified manager who is supported by a strong deputy. Staff report that leaders and managers value their opinions and welcome any ideas on how to improve the home. There is a committed team of staff in place who work

well together. They know the children well and morale is good. Staff say they work well as a team and they enjoy working in the home.

Since the last inspection, the manager's internal reviewing and monitoring systems have improved. The manager ensures that she now has clear oversight of all documentation and encourages staff to read all the children's plans. The manager uses external monitoring by the independent person to inform any improvements required.

Staff receive good-quality supervision and team meetings are well attended. The manager has recently introduced training workshops. These are helping staff improve their practice and develop their skills and knowledge. Staff are consistently encouraged to familiarise themselves with policies, procedures and children's case records. New staff are given opportunities to shadow team members when they first join the team.

Staff have opportunities to undertake training that develops their understanding, knowledge and skills around the individual needs of the children. This includes needs associated with self-harm, the use of ligatures, autism spectrum disorder and internet safety.

There is good collaboration with a range of agencies. Feedback from a range of professionals is complimentary. One professional described communication as 'amazing'. Another professional said, 'Children's choices are promoted, and they are fully involved in the day-to-day aspects of the home.' This is a strength of the home.

All previous requirements have been met.

## 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     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or<br/>if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home,<br/>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;<br/>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.<br/>(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that all employment gaps for staff are sufficiently checked. Where there are gaps and inaccuracies in identification checks, the manager must speak to the staff member to clarify the information.</p> | 14 July 2023 |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

## **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:** 2667746

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Birchwood Children's Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Regent House, Regent Street, Blackburn,  
Lancashire BB1 6BH

**Responsible individual:** Salman Ugradar

**Registered manager:** Rachel Grima

## Inspector

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector



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