

2812370

Registered provider: Worcestershire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and registered to provide short breaks for children with learning disabilities and can care for up to four children on any one night.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2024. He holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 October 2025

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: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children who stay at this home benefit from a nurturing and stimulating environment. Staff ensure that children have positive stays where they are helped to develop their independence and social engagement and have fun.

The manager carefully considers children's needs to ensure that it is appropriate for them to have stays together. This contributes to the success of their stays. Groupings are based on compatibility and shared interests, such as a girls' group, which fosters positive peer relationships and a sense of belonging.

Children's views are central to everything. They are actively involved in decision-making through feedback forms, menu planning and suggestions for future visits. This inclusive approach ensures that children feel valued and that they have positive experiences.

Staff know children well and carefully plan activities and outings in consultation with them. Staff make sure that activities reflect individual preferences and interests. Children's breaks provide opportunities to build friendships and participate in community-based activities such as swimming or visiting places of interest.

Staff are committed to maintaining children's routines. For example, one child has weekly riding lessons. When this is during the child's stay, staff still take the child so that they do not miss out.

Staff have high aspirations for children. They work with families and education settings to support consistent approaches towards achieving shared goals. As a result, children make measurable progress in areas such as communication, independence, emotional regulation and social interaction.

The introduction of a well-being dog has been carefully considered and is proving beneficial. The children look forward to seeing the dog and it motivates children to engage in activities such as walking and getting outdoors. Both children and staff respond warmly to the dog, and its presence enhances everyone's emotional well-being. Potential risks relating to the dog are effectively assessed and managed.

The home is well maintained and appropriate for the needs of the children. Bedrooms are personalised with children's belongings, and staff make sure bedding is tailored to individual preferences. A wide selection of toys and games are available. Outdoor areas have been further enhanced with the addition of a seating area and a vegetable plot, complementing existing features such as a covered sandpit, trampoline and outdoor play equipment.

Feedback from parents and professionals is overwhelmingly positive. Families describe the service as essential, with some saying they could not manage without it and referring to it as a 'lifesaver'.

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the individual needs and vulnerabilities of the children and use this to keep them safe. They provide consistent routines, boundaries and expectations, which contributes to a stable and secure environment.

The manager makes sure staffing levels are sufficient to meet children's needs and maintain safety. When new risks are identified, staff respond proactively and update their plans. However, on one occasion, new information was not shared with the placing authority in a timely manner.

When an online risk for one child was identified, the manager made sure the child's plans were updated and all staff made aware of strategies to keep the child safe. The manager and staff worked with the child's family and external agencies to promote safety and learning with the child.

There is good multi-agency working at this home. Staff and the manager work with children's placing authorities in supporting the wider care plans for children, including for children on child protection plans.

There are few incidents at the home. When incidents do occur, staff respond appropriately and in line with the home's behaviour management policy. Physical intervention is used only when necessary to prevent harm and is proportionate to the situation. Children do not go missing, however, there are clear procedures in place in the event that this should happen.

Staff understand the health needs of children. They have had the appropriate training to ensure they meet children's health needs and to administer medication. In addition, the manager tests individual staff competencies to check their knowledge.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an ambitious and inspirational registered manager who demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that children receive the highest standard of care. The manager consistently goes above and beyond the expectations of a short-breaks service, and places children at the centre of everything.

A notable example of this commitment is the manager's involvement in supporting a child during a period of crisis. The manager played a pivotal role in the ongoing support for the child at the family home and in helping with the child's move from the family home to a new placement. This included sharing relevant information and helping with pre-placement visits. This support helped the child receive continuity of care and meaningful social opportunities, contributing positively to their emotional well-being.

The manager advocates for children when he feels they would benefit from additional overnight stays. His monitoring has identified that, for some children, having more frequent overnight stays results in greater progress and improved outcomes.

The manager is innovative and forward-thinking in identifying ways to enhance the care provided to children. Following robust research, the introduction of a well-being dog has had a positive impact on both children and staff. Further research led to a review of transport arrangements. This helped the manager identify not only cost efficiencies but also improved outcomes for children when the home provided transport directly.

The manager has introduced 'positive books'. These are personalised records that capture children's achievements, experiences and progress during their time at the home. These books, along with cushions made from children's bedding, are given to children when they move on, providing a tangible and familiar link to their past. This helps children share their experiences with new carers and family members.

The manager is creative in fundraising and seeking support from external organisations. This has included running a marathon to raise funds and building links with the local Women's Institute. These efforts have resulted in improved outdoor spaces for children. The manager has also successfully engaged volunteers through local authority connections to help with the work in enhancing the garden.

Staff say they feel well supported by the manager and wider leadership team. The manager is visible, approachable and actively involved in the day-to-day running of the home, including supporting shifts when needed. Staff benefit from regular supervision and are encouraged to develop professionally through a range of learning opportunities, including training tailored to the specific needs of the children.

The manager maintains strong and effective relationships with families and professionals. Staff attend meetings, advocate for children and demonstrate a creative approach to problem-solving. Feedback from families and professionals highlights a high level of trust in the manager and staff team, with praise for their commitment, communication and child-centred practice.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure there are effective working relationships with each child's placing authority and with other relevant people. Specifically, that there are no delays in sharing with the placing authority any new or emerging behaviours from children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.3)

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: 2812370

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Worcestershire County Council

Registered provider address: Worcestershire County Council, 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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