

SC031504

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered to provide a short-break service and longer-term care for up to six children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home full time. Three children were receiving a short-break service.

The registered manager has been in post since 2007.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 August 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 15 April 2024

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
15/04/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/11/2023	Full	Good
07/03/2023	Full	Good
18/05/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children like living at the home and visiting for short breaks. Parents said how much their children enjoyed their stays and how much their child and the family got out of their time at the home. Parents spoke about the support the staff provide to them as well. They said staff were 'brilliant' and 'amazing' and that they 'go above and beyond for the children'. Parents spoke about how much they trust the staff as they know how much the staff care for their child. Parents are proud of the progress their children have made and continue to make. This view was supported by the children's social workers. In addition, social workers noted the children's improved communication skills, improved sleep patterns, enhanced independence skills and increased access to the community. They complimented staff on their communication skills with them as professionals but more importantly with the children. They all said how well the staff understand the children and how much they care about each child.

Children are happy at the home. The quality of care the staff provide for the children is good. They understand each child's needs and how to fulfil them. Staff speak with emotion, warmth and pride about the children they care for. They are proud of each child's achievements and celebrate them.

Staff are skilled communicators. They understand each child's communication needs and fulfil them. They use social stories effectively to increase children's understanding of events and situations. A good example of this is the social stories used to prepare the children for the refurbishment of the bathroom and kitchen. This work helped to manage children's anxieties around the disruption and noise. Staff have also created a monthly 'newspaper' for families detailing all that has been happening at the home. The newspaper features celebrations and children's achievements and welcomes new children. Each edition includes Makaton signs and symbols of the month.

Staff ensure that children's plans capture and value the voice of the child. This links to the improvement of consultation with children. Staff support children through a range of communication systems to have their voices heard and make choices.

Children's healthcare needs are well met. Due to the complexity of some children's health needs, they are supported by additional nursing staff both day and night. This work is supported by detailed health plans that have been developed with the relevant health professionals, which provide good consistency of care for staff and nurses.

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

Children are safe at the home. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities as well as the additional vulnerabilities of the children they care for. Records of safeguarding incidents are detailed and evidence all action taken to protect children.

Leaders and managers monitor and review these incidents and use lessons learned from them to improve and develop staff practice.

Behaviour is appropriately managed. For one child, there has been a significant decrease in incidents and the use of restraint. Children's behaviour plans are of good quality and current and provide clear guidance for staff.

Staff are not risk averse. They use risk assessments effectively not only to keep children safe but also to enable them to take part in fun activities and events.

Recruitment follows safer recruitment practices, which helps to protect children at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager demonstrates good understanding and oversight of the home. She understands the home's strengths and areas for development and has a clear development plan. This is kept under review and links to the manager's monthly reports to the responsible individual. These plans provide evidence of the progress being made. To support the registered manager, a new manager has been appointed to the long-stay side of the home, which has strengthened the management team.

Staff are appropriately trained for their role. During the inspection, some training was taking place which was related to the needs of a prospective new child.

Staff morale has improved. Staff are very positive about working at the home and the management of the home. They were very complimentary about the registered manager, especially her commitment to the home and the support she provides for the team. Staff feel that leaders and managers are approachable. They feel listened to and valued as a team.

Staffing at the home is appropriate. However, recruitment is ongoing. Children in the long-stay side of the home are also supported by external agency and nursing staff. These staff are known to the children as they have been supporting them for a long time. Leaders and managers strive to ensure there is consistency in the additional staff who come to care for the children.

Staff receive supervision which helps them reflect on their practice, and which supports them and their development. However, records of supervision sessions do not always capture the discussion or the support provided.

Some of the language used in the home's records is institutional, vague and emotive, which detracts from the clarity of these records. Leaders and managers have recently sent out further guidance for staff on this.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of staff supervision sessions are of a consistently good quality, reflecting the discussion held and any actions to be taken. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that children's records do not contain institutional, vague or emotionally charged language as the use of such language detracts from the clarity of the record. ('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: SC031504

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Registered provider address: Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

Responsible individual: Kate Markley

Registered manager: Valerie Mower

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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