

# 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 provides a short-break service and longer-term care for up to 6 children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home full time. Four children were receiving a short-break service at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2007 and is suitably qualified.

### Inspection dates: 20 and 21 April 2026

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <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:** 6 August 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 06/08/2025      | Full            | Good                            |
| 15/04/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 15/11/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 07/03/2023      | Full            | Good                            |

## Summary of findings

A consistent and committed staff team care for the children. Staff have a strong understanding of how to meet children's individual needs, preferences and communication styles.

Children's health needs are managed effectively and when needed ensure appropriate nursing provision is in place.

Leaders have made progress in updating and refurbishing many areas of the home. However, some improvements are needed to the external areas.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children who live at the home and those who attend for short breaks are cared for by a consistent and committed staff team. Staff know children well and have a strong understanding of their individual needs, preferences and communication styles. They are warm, attentive and responsive, which helps children feel safe, valued and well supported.

Staff support children effectively to make progress with their independence, social skills and emotional regulation. As a result, children are increasingly able to manage their emotions more appropriately and engage positively with others.

Moves into and out of the home are carefully planned and managed at each child's pace. Children and families are encouraged to visit the home, ask questions and take away information. Children staying on short breaks benefit from introductory visits, including tea visits and opportunities to try new experiences before overnight stays. For children who live at the home, leaders are proactive in planning future moves. The manager advocates strongly on behalf of children to ensure assessments and funding are secured in good time. This includes visiting potential placements and providing informed professional views on their suitability.

Staff understand the importance of positive peer relationships. They ensure that, when possible, children who attend for short breaks stay together with children they know and enjoy spending time with. This supports children to feel settled and confident during their stays.

Children benefit from a wide range of social opportunities both within the home and in the wider community. The extensive grounds provide opportunities for children to be active and use a range of play equipment. Staff take children swimming, to local parks and places of interest, and support them to go shopping, when they can choose items for the home and foods they enjoy. Children who live at the home benefit from annual holidays, and staff organise visits to maintain friendships with school friends.

Children who live at the home are supported to engage with education. For children on short breaks, staff work closely with schools to ensure consistency of care and approach. When children living at the home do not have a school placement, leaders ensure they receive in-house education and tuition. One child who had been out of education for some time was able to return to school, which improved their confidence and self-esteem and enabled them to develop friendships.

Children's views are central to everything. Staff ensure all children are given opportunities to express their wishes and make choices. Staff are skilled in interpreting non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication. Staff use signs, symbols, social stories and objects of reference effectively, and allow children time and support to show staff what they want.

Children who live at the home are supported to maintain relationships with their families, even when this is challenging due to parents' individual needs. Staff have successfully helped one child to get back in touch with an older sibling, which resulted in both embracing a positive and meaningful renewed relationship.

Children's health needs are managed effectively. When children require high levels of medical support, leaders ensure appropriate nursing provision is in place. For one child receiving 24-hour nursing care, staff ensured that, even as their health deteriorated, they were cared for in a familiar environment, surrounded by things they enjoyed and people who were important to them.

The home is purpose-built and requires ongoing maintenance. Leaders have made progress in updating and refurbishing many areas of the home. Children on short breaks are supported to personalise their bedrooms with their own belongings. Children who live at the home are actively encouraged to make their rooms their own, including choosing furnishings, colours and decorations that reflect their interests. However, some improvement is needed to the external areas. Weeds and overgrown planting require attention, the sensory garden needs further maintenance and climbing plants on the building need to be cut back. The external appearance detracts from the overall sense that the home is well cared for.

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

Children are kept safe by a staff team who know them well and understand their individual needs and vulnerabilities. Staff provide clear structure and predictable routines. This helps children understand what is happening and reduces children's anxiety.

Staff are consistent in their approach and use a wide range of communication methods to help children express when they are upset, anxious or worried. As a result, children are increasingly able to communicate their feelings, incidents have reduced and children are learning to manage their emotions in more appropriate ways.

When children experience difficulties with each other, staff review arrangements promptly and make appropriate changes to their stays. This helps to minimise risks and ensures children are protected from situations that may increase anxiety or lead to unsafe behaviour, such as heightened noise levels or physical conflict.

At times, children require support to manage their emotions. Staff may use physical intervention to keep children safe. However, this is only used as a last resort. Staff use de-escalation strategies first and intervene physically only when all other calming approaches have been unsuccessful.

Children benefit from high staffing ratios. This enables staff to assess and manage risks effectively so children can access community activities safely. As a result, children are appropriately supervised and supported to engage in positive experiences away from the home.

The home has not received any complaints or allegations against staff. When concerns have arisen about other adults involved in children's care, staff have ensured these concerns are shared with relevant professionals. However, on one occasion, there was a delay in following the home's safeguarding reporting protocol. Although no harm occurred and the child remained safe, leaders recognise that such delays could place children at risk and are addressing this.

Children are safeguarded online. The home uses parental controls on the Wi-Fi and staff actively monitor children's internet use. When concerns arise, staff respond promptly by checking devices and supporting children to learn about online risks and how to stay safe.

There have been 2 medication errors, both resulting from human error and causing no harm to children. Leaders responded appropriately by reviewing practice, strengthening protocols and sharing learning with the staff team. This has reduced the risk of similar errors happening.

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

The home is led by a registered manager, supported by a manager with responsibility for children who live at the home and a deputy manager. Together, they provide stable and effective leadership.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that children receive the best possible care. They know the children well, and children are familiar and comfortable with them. Leaders are visible and approachable and play an integral role in the care of children.

Leaders and staff pay close attention to the small but significant details that enhance children's experiences of living and staying at the home. These thoughtful actions have a meaningful impact. For example, staff create personalised photo books for children to keep when they leave the home. Staff supported one child attending for short breaks to choose a special outfit for their leaving celebration. In another example, one manager

provided support to a child and their family at a hospice, working extended hours to ensure the child was comforted and cared for. Staff also took time to decorate the child's bedroom at the hospice, so it reflected the child's interests and contained items that were meaningful to them. These actions demonstrate leaders and staff's commitment to a deeply child-centred approach.

Leaders ensure staff receive comprehensive inductions and benefit from ongoing learning opportunities. This supports staff to develop the knowledge and skills needed to meet children's complex and individual needs effectively.

Staff report receiving exceptional levels of support from leaders, particularly during emotionally challenging periods. They describe the personal support offered as invaluable and say it has helped them to continue providing high-quality care for children. This demonstrates leaders' strong understanding of the emotional demands placed on staff and their commitment to staff wellbeing.

Managers have effective monitoring systems in place and are aware of areas requiring further development. They are reflective about practice and actively seek to improve outcomes for children. However, some further work is needed to strengthen staff understanding of terminology used when completing children's records, to ensure consistency and clarity.

The registered manager regularly reviews the home's statement of purpose. However, these updates have not always been shared with the regulator following review. It is important that amended statements of purpose are submitted to ensure the regulator has an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the service.

Feedback from external professionals is consistently positive. Professionals speak highly of the quality of care children receive, the range of experiences available to them and the commitment and creativity of the staff team, describing how staff often think 'outside the box' to meet children's needs.

## 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 must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision.<br/>(Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p> | 5 June 2026 |

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that language used in children's records does not contain institutionalised, 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)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained in such a way that it is a nurturing and supportive environment that meet the needs of the children,. Specifically, that the outside areas are well maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure staff understand how to report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child in the home being either at risk of, or already experiencing, significant harm. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15)

### 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:** Clare Collier

**Registered manager:** Valerie Mower

## Inspector

Debbie Bond, Social Care Inspector



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