

SC036584

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority. The home provides care for up to four children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. The inspector spent time with each of them.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2023. He holds a level 5 qualification in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 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: 29 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/05/2024	Full	Good
27/09/2023	Full	Good
24/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, four children have moved into the home and four have moved out. Children are involved in planning their moves where possible, and moves are supported in line with their wishes. One child's plan was changed numerous times at their request. As a result, their move into the home has been a positive experience. When children move on from the home, children and staff remain in touch. One child who has moved on to semi-independence was supported to return and spend time at the home during the Christmas period. Listening to children's views and maintaining relationships once children have left helps children to feel valued and have a sense of belonging.

Improvements have been made to the home environment over the last year. It is homely, with warm and welcoming shared areas where children and adults enjoy spending time together. Children and staff eat their evening meals together at the dining table, spending time discussing their day. Children's bedrooms are personalised and children have pet land snails and guinea pigs at the home. These are well cared for by the children and staff, helping children to feel a sense of responsibility and achievement. Photos of the children are on display throughout the home along with their own artwork and achievements.

Managers and staff prioritise children's education and have high aspirations for them. All children attend school full time and are all making progress in this area. One child wants to become a marine biologist. They are currently completing a scuba diving qualification to support them to work towards this.

Children's health and well-being are well supported. One child has been helped to attend a medication review, resulting in a reduction in medication in line with their wishes. The manager advocated for the child, encouraging education professionals to explore alternative strategies to support the child's behaviour without the reliance on medication. Staff also ensured the child accessed medical appointments to rule out any physical health issues that may affect their behaviours. This proactive approach reassures the child and promotes well-informed child-centred strategies, ensuring that behaviour is not viewed in isolation.

Managers and staff actively help children to maintain and develop meaningful relationships with those who are important to them. Friends are welcomed into the home, helping to promote a sense of normality and belonging. Family time is supported in line with the child's care plan. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of each child's life history and use this to help children make sense of their past experiences. When children have experienced parental loss and absence, staff provide sensitive support to help them understand their family background and identity.

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

Children say that they feel safe in the home. One child said: 'I can talk to the staff about anything. They are a 10 out of 10 in keeping me safe.'

Missing-from-home incidents are well managed. Staff have a clear understanding of each child's individual risk and what to do when they go missing. They respond proactively, undertaking local searches, contacting relevant individuals, and working in line with each child's safety plan. When children do return, they are warmly welcomed back to the home, with thoughtful gestures that demonstrate care and nurture. Multi-agency working in response to missing incidents is positive and effective, helping to ensure that all involved professionals are contributing to managing risks in this area.

Managers and staff recognise the evolving risks associated with children's internet use. There have been specific challenges in this area due to one child's technological skills and knowledge. In response, staff and managers have been proactive and creative in seeking external advice and resources to ensure the child's safety online. While ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place, staff have also worked closely with the child to help them develop a deeper understanding of online risks. This has helped equip them with practical strategies to keep safe.

Staff know the children well. They respond to their needs using the PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) model of care. Staff seek consultation from the child and adolescent mental health services to help them interpret children's presenting behaviours through a trauma-informed lens. Psychologists supporting the staff said that they have an excellent understanding of the children and are extremely flexible in their practice. This supports care to be individualised, helping children to feel valued, respected and more in control of their lives.

Children respond well to guidance and boundaries. Each child has a personalised behaviour support plan, and their associated risks are well understood, assessed and reviewed by staff. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort. When incidents do occur, children are offered the opportunity to engage in post-incident reflection to help them understand what happened, express their feelings and rebuild trust. This, and meaningful debriefs with staff following incidents, has helped lead to a notable reduction in the use of physical interventions. This reflects the staff team's growing skill and confidence in de-escalation and their relationship-based approach.

Allegations and complaints are well managed. Referrals are made to the local authority designated officer when necessary, ensuring transparency and external oversight. Where internal investigations are required, these are undertaken thoroughly and promptly. Children know how to complain and are actively supported to do so. Their views are listened to and acted upon, which reinforces their sense of safety and trust in the adults caring for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is child focused and enthusiastic. He refers to the children with genuine warmth, care and pride and sets high expectations for their progress and outcomes. This positive, child-focused approach is reciprocated within the staff team. The manager is well supported by a capable deputy and senior leadership team, whose members have a shared ethos of placing children at the centre of their practice.

Managers and staff have positive working relationships with the children's professional support network. Professional feedback is unanimously positive and highlights the home's strong partnership working. A child's social worker said: 'Communication from the home is fantastic. They always made sure [child's name] had a voice and remained really proactive in keeping them safe.'

Children benefit from the consistency of a stable and cohesive staff team. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. This supports their ongoing development and reflective practice. Monthly team meetings are well attended and provide a valuable space for shared learning and professional growth. This is further strengthened by monthly clinical supervision from a therapeutic team. Staff are positive about their experience of working in the home, saying that they feel well supported by the manager and leadership team. This fosters a strong sense of teamwork and shared purpose. As a result, staff remain motivated, engaged and committed to delivering high-quality care to children.

The manager and deputy have effective systems to monitor and evaluate practice. These enable the identification of patterns, trends and areas for development, which in turn supports continuous improvement. Peer audits are used constructively to provide external challenge and positive reinforcement. This reflective approach not only highlights good practice but also helps to identify staff training needs. As a result, the home maintains a learning environment where staff are supported to reflect and develop their skills to deliver high-quality care.

No requirements or recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection.

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: SC036584

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: PO Box 15, Walsall WS1 1TP

Responsible individual: Jivan Sembi

Registered manager: Neil Allen

Inspector

Mandy Wake, Social Care Inspector

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