

SC036584

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have emotional and behavioural needs.

The manager was appointed in October 2022. They have submitted an application to register and are awaiting their suitable person interview.

Inspection date: 21 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 24 May 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Three children live in the home. One child has lived here for almost three years and another child for two years. The third child moved in in January 2023. The manager has plans for a fourth child to join them in the coming months.

Vast improvements have been made to the quality of the environment. The manager is working hard, alongside staff, to make the home feel comforting and welcoming. Children benefit from a bright, clean and warm home. One child's photography has been made into canvases which are displayed on the walls. Another child has plans to further improve the conservatory. The garden is large and well kept, but the manager plans to make this into a much more enjoyable space for children, staff and Lucky the rabbit.

Carefully planned care ensures that staff understand children's needs and enables them to provide children with the best chance to make progress. Staff are quick to praise children for their achievements and recognise even the smallest steps of progress. One child is now spending more time out of their bedroom. Another child settled quickly when they moved in and immediately started to enjoy different activities.

Extensive work to tackle barriers to education is having a positive impact on children. At the previous inspection, both children had been out of education for a significant period. Staff have worked hard with children and professionals to find the right kind of education and support plans for children. As a result, one child is now going to school. Another child is doing work experience and on the day of the inspection visited a new school. These are huge achievements. In addition, managers secured a school place for the new child prior to them moving in.

Staff understand the health needs of children well. Preventative and targeted support for one child to stop smoking tobacco is ongoing. Staff are fully aware of how to monitor and support one child with a significant health concern. Health plans are detailed, to provide staff with information they need, as well as them having access to support from health professionals.

The safety of children

Managers and staff think creatively on how they can reduce risk to children. For one child, this is notably having a good impact on their safety and well-being. Because of the open and honest work with the child, their mother and the team around them,

family time has increased, boundaries have been firmed up and serious incidents such as going missing from home and self-harm are decreasing significantly.

Staff develop extremely positive relationships with children. There is a warm and calm sense around the home. During the inspection, staff were seen to be caring, affectionate and kind to children. Children are comfortable to hug staff, and staff are appropriately tactile with them. These relationships support children to talk about any problems or concerns they may have.

The manager has introduced new behaviour risk management plans. Children have helped staff to develop them so they understand how they can best be supported, particularly in times of crisis. On three separate occasions, staff used a guide during behavioural incidents to direct children away from harming themselves or others. These types of incidents are decreasing, and staff have not had to intervene physically since September 2022.

Staff encourage children to be respectful of one another and to become more tolerant of each other. Staff are seeing more instances of relationships improving. For example, one child recently decorated the living room for another child's birthday and wrote in their birthday card.

Managers and staff follow safeguarding procedures effectively. They make referrals to safeguarding professionals as required. Children always receive a response to any complaints they make.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leadership and management of the home have undergone a number of changes in the past year. One manager was appointed but did not apply to register and subsequently left. The current manager has been in post since October 2022 and has submitted an application to register. Their suitability is due to be assessed by Ofsted. The residential services manager has been a consistent person in children's lives and the management of the home.

Through effective monitoring, the manager has a good understanding of the quality of care provided to children. When they began in their role, they instantly started to review practice and introduce changes to improve children's experiences. For example, there is now an expectation of good modelling to children at mealtimes, when staff eat together at the table and encourage children to join them. They are also improving their quality of care review to ensure that they include feedback and an evaluation and action plan.

The planning for the new child who moved into the home was strong. The manager developed a clear plan on how to support the child so their move in was successful. Good partnership working took place with the child and their professionals. The manager had all the information he needed to plan the care. The child benefited from staff visiting him, and him visiting the home, meeting the other children and enjoying horse riding before moving in permanently.

Staff speak highly of the current manager, of how he is changing the culture and embedding the model of care. All staff have had training required to meet the needs of the children. Staff now have appraisals annually. Staff have been recruited in line with schedule 2.

Leaders and managers have made substantial progress to address the shortfalls found at the previous inspection. All previous requirements and recommendations have been met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/03/2022	Full	Inadequate
23/01/2020	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Good

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC036584

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Walsall WS1 1TP

Responsible individual: Jivan Sembi

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Nicola Lownds, Social Care Inspector

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