

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 owned and managed by the local authority. The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with complex needs.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2019 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2018	Full	Good
18/01/2018	Full	Good
10/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/10/2016	Full	Good

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, 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))	06/03/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	06/03/2020
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. Details of any medicines kept for the child in the home, including details of— the administration of any medicine to the child. (Regulation 36 (1), Schedule 3 (25)(b))	06/03/2020

Recommendations

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet

the child's needs (see Regulations 5(c)). Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

In particular, staff should escalate concerns that children's plans are not being progressed in a timely way to the responsible placing local authority.

- Children's homes staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home's plan for their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)

In particular, the registered manager should ensure that there are opportunities for her to meet with children individually and as a group to gain and respond to their wishes, views and ideas about how the home could develop.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Professionals and parents are positive about the staff in the home. They note that staff are committed to children and advocate for them. Parents report that staff are highly supportive of them as they develop their parenting and understanding of their children. Because of these positive relationships, professionals and parents feel that children are safe in staff's care.

Staff support children with their individual needs. This includes religious observance, encouragement to be part of the children in care council, support at health appointments and supporting arrangements for children to see their families. Children report that their relationships with staff, particularly key workers, are important to them. There have been some changes in key workers, which has been unsettling. However, staff have ensured that children remain thought about and that their needs have been met during these times. This means that children know that staff can be relied on and this helps them to know staff care.

Staff prioritise children's education. They ensure that children attend school and for some this is measurable progress. When children are out of education, staff make sure that school places are found quickly so that children can remain engaged in their education. This safeguards children's future prospects.

Children all attend school or college. Staff provide additional support to children when they need it, through transport or at the school itself. Children know that staff value education as this is a key factor in their future success.

Staff have developed clear resources to help children develop their independence. These programmes are clear, well planned and provide a record that children can refer back to.

Records of this work help children to see clearly how they are developing and help children to move towards independence with confidence.

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

Staff are alert to the issue of radicalisation. Where there are concerns, staff have taken these issues and concerns forward. Staff records of this escalation and challenge are not clearly collated and this makes oversight difficult. Some staff are not confident to challenge young people about these concerns. Staff confidence to challenge young people about their concerns is an area for development that managers are aware of and are addressing. This will help to keep children safe.

Staff have not consistently updated all children's risk assessments. Despite this, staff talk confidently about risks relevant to children and how to manage them. Staff in the home also have a useful group risk assessment which collates common key risks across the child group and helps staff to see how risks affect different children and the group. This risk assessment is not up to date. This means that staff do not have the most up-to-date information and direction in how to work with and reduce risks for children.

There has been one historical incident of a delay in an allegation being raised appropriately. The current manager escalated this at the point they became aware of it and this was clearly addressed. Current staff are clear on their safeguarding responsibilities, have been trained in this area and are aware of policy. This means that staff working with children know what to do if an allegation is made or a concern is raised by a child.

Staff store medication in the home securely and they are trained to administer medication safely. There has been one occasion where a child had their medication but staff did not accurately record this. Management oversight of these records did not note this. Medication records are unclear when medications are prescribed and when they cease. Staff are aware of changes, but this is not reflected in records. Where children can self-administer some medication, they are assessed to do this safely. This helps children to build an important skill that they will need in later life.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Managers do not monitor the home's activity comprehensively. Some key documents in children's files are not up to date and staff confirmation that they have read and understand documents cannot be assured. This means that the manager of the home cannot ensure that best practice is followed and developed to improve the quality of care.

Children's plans in the home are good. However, where there is drift outside of the home with care plans, managers could escalate concerns quickly using the children's homes regulations. This would mean that children are better supported in the progression of their plans.

Managers and staff in the home have good knowledge and insight about children and their needs. This helps them to be clear externally with how children need help and support. However, children do not always know when staff have advocated for them. This means that they do not know the true commitment that managers and staff have to them and their well-being. This indicates that the line of communication between staff and children is not always open about positive support offered and this is a missed opportunity for staff to show their commitment.

Children have the opportunity to put forward their views through monthly residents' meetings. Although answers to questions are sometimes not what children want, staff are able to explain the rationale for decisions made. Staff sometimes take too long to respond to children's requests. The manager does not attend the residents' meetings, which is a missed opportunity for her to formally hear and respond to their views. This is easily remedied and would enable children and the manager to get to know each other better.

The statement of purpose for the home outlines the work of the home well. This needs to be regularly reviewed as needed and provided to Ofsted. This ensures that those who work with and within the home can understand the home's purpose of care and the experience of staff providing this.

The manager of the home is aware of key practice developments for the home. She has proactively worked with senior managers to strengthen staffing to role model practice, increasing consistency and boundaries for children. The manager has proactively ensured that staff have access to reflective consultation with clinical psychotherapy staff to deepen their understanding of children. The manager also ensures that staff have good access to relevant training. This ensures that staff who work with children are able to develop practice to better fulfil their roles and are better empowered to help children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1TP

Responsible individual: Jivan Sembi

Registered manager: Michaela Adamson

Inspector

Karol Keenan: social care inspector

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