

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 is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 September 2023

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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 24 May 2022

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Two children have moved into the home since the last inspection. Staff worked well with partner agencies to support the children to move in, taking account of their individual needs. As a result, children feel welcome and settle well into their home.

Staff know children well and their consistent child-centred approach takes account of the trauma children have experienced. This enables the staff to provide children with individualised care. Children feel safe and secure. One child's family member told the inspector, 'When [name of child] is upset, staff keep them safe, allow them to talk things through and give them the support they need at all times.'

Staff help children to engage with their education. They recognise that children have different needs, and they understand children's barriers to education. They work effectively with education professionals to help children to overcome these barriers. This supportive approach helps to improve children's attendance and attainment. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.

The manager and staff support children to pursue their individual interests. They encourage children to try new activities in and around the home and in the community. Children's achievements are celebrated. One child who has a keen interest in photography has their photos on display around the home and is supported to progress their interest via local photography projects. Another child was helped by staff and the other children to arrange a charity event for cancer. This event was well attended and raised a significant amount for charity. These approaches support children to develop their confidence while having fun.

The home is suitably furnished to meet children's needs and there is space for children to spend time together and on their own. The manager and staff have worked with the children to improve the decor in the home and to personalise children's bedrooms. This creates an atmosphere where children feel at ease and reflects children's personal interests. This has allowed children to invest in their home and to develop a sense of belonging. Children said there is nothing they would want to change about their home.

The manager ensures that staff meet children's health needs. Children enjoy healthy balanced meals. However, treats were locked away to manage one child's eating habits related to unhealthy snacks, without a plan to help the child to learn to manage their diet. This indicates staff do not always support children to develop healthy eating habits.

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

Managers and staff know the children well and understand their needs. They ensure that there are clear boundaries and expectations in place to help keep children safe. As a result, there has been a reduction in incidents since the last inspection and children say they feel safe in the home.

Staff take immediate action when children go missing from care. Missing-from-care protocols are followed effectively to safeguard children. During incidents of children going missing, staff work with the police to locate and return children home safely. Managers ensure that children receive return home interviews and the information gained from these interviews is used to review safeguarding strategies. This supportive approach means that children feel reassured and know that staff care about their well-being. In addition, staff have supported children to increase the time they spend out in the community, taking account of risks according to children's age and emerging independence.

Staff and the manager are aware of concerns around some peer relationships in the home. These are monitored and work is undertaken to support children to improve their relationships and have empathy for each other. This approach has meant there have been no incidents related to bullying and children have been supported to maintain positive relationships.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of online safety and help children to learn how to use the internet safely. Staff install apps on children's devices to ensure that children are only accessing age-appropriate material. These actions help to safeguard children when they use the internet.

Managers ensure that all complaints made by children are taken seriously and acted on. Since the last inspection, when complaints have been made, the manager has followed the home's policies and responded to the complaints to resolve the issues. Consequently, children feel listened to and valued.

Leaders and managers respond to allegations immediately. When allegations are made, staff prioritise the safety and well-being of children. Leaders are thorough in their investigations and ensure that children are informed of any action taken.

Staff and managers have responded to and managed well a significant number of safeguarding matters. However, in one incident reviewed at this inspection, staff failed to seek advice or medical attention for a child under the influence of a known substance until the matter was reviewed by a manager the following day. It was then identified that the child needed immediate medical attention. Managers have reviewed the incident and put in place action to prevent similar incidents occurring.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager knows all the children well and is motivated to provide children with a good standard of care. He is keen to continue to develop the service to provide children with consistency to help them to progress.

Staff speak positively about the managers. They said managers are very supportive and are always available to help when needed. Staff have regular supervision sessions and team meetings, which help them to reflect and continue to develop their therapeutic practice. The staff are motivated and focused on the way they respond to and meet children's all-round needs.

The managers work proactively with a number of external professionals to promote positive outcomes for children. This includes working with services such as the virtual school to enable children to access an education setting that best meets their needs, while taking into account their wishes and feelings.

Professionals are complimentary of the care the managers and staff provide. One child's education professional said the staff are 'supportive and demonstrate a genuine care for the young people who reside there. In our experience, the home is well run, and the young people are offered the right amount of support. All relevant meetings are attended and staff have gone above and beyond to ensure that the young person is effectively safeguarded.' Overall, managers and staff communicate well with other professionals. This means children benefit from well-coordinated care.

Managers have monitoring systems that allow them to have good oversight of the progress made by children. They evaluate incidents and identify actions to develop practice. They have a good understanding of the home's strengths and the areas that require development. As a result, children experience continuously improving care.

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
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(v)(vi)) In particular, when there is a serious concern about a child's health, that staff seek medical advice. In addition, that strategies are put in place to inform staff how to monitor the child's health and how to identify and act should the child's health deteriorate.	13 October 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance, and supplement that provided by their school through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

In Particular children should be supported to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles, diets and habits, which does not include not having access to treats which are locked away as a method of maintaining a healthy diets. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)

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

Responsible individual: Jivan Sembi

Registered manager: Neil Allen

Inspector

Sharon Bourne, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023