

SC037657

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

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: 22 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/08/2023	Full	Good
05/04/2022	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/04/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Both children have lived at the home for over a year, and they have made progress in many aspects of their lives. Staff provide warm, nurturing care and support to help children to develop a sense of belonging.

Children attend school regularly. Staff have high expectations of school attendance, and the manager works alongside other professionals to ensure that appropriate support is in place. As a result, children are now engaging in their learning. Children are happy to attend school and are making progress. One child is preparing to take their GCSEs and staff support the child to attend extra classes each week after school. This is helping the child to gain confidence in their abilities.

Children are supported to have regular quality time with their families. Staff encourage families to visit the home regularly and support family time in the community. One child was recently supported by staff to spend quality time with their sisters in Wales. This is developing strong bonds and positive shared experiences.

Children's health needs are being met. Staff ensure that children have access to support from community and specialist health services and that children attend their appointments. This multi-agency working supports children's physical and emotional health and well-being.

Children are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities and their interests are supported. One child attends weekly morris dancing classes even though at present due to health issues they are unable to participate. The child wants to continue to see their friends and support them in their competitions. This shows that positive friendships have been developed and maintained. Staff support the other child to regularly watch their favourite football team play. This support is developing children's social skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Children's achievements are celebrated. Staff give children meaningful rewards, based on their likes and interests. This positive approach helps children to develop a more positive view about themselves. Children's wishes and feelings are actively encouraged through regular discussions. Children take an active part in making choices about their day-to-day lives.

Since the last inspection, the manager has introduced more structured, planned discussions with children so that support is given to meet the needs identified in their care plans. However, this is not embedded in practice by staff. This means that children are not consistently supported in dealing with past traumas and for them to develop skills for the future.

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

Children said they feel safe in the home. Children's safety is consistently at the centre of staff's practice. Staff speak to children regularly to ensure that they understand what to do if they had a concern. Children were clear on the process and there have been no complaints.

Staff have a good understanding of children's behaviours and individual vulnerabilities. The manager is quick to identify emerging risk for children and is working with other professionals to ensure that children are safeguarded. To support the staff in managing these risks there are robust risk assessments in place and these are kept updated. There have been no missing-from-home incidents.

Significant incidents are well managed. Staff act appropriately to ensure that the safety of the children is paramount. The manager ensures that all appropriate professionals are informed.

Children receive support to manage their behaviours and emotions safely. Staff establish clear boundaries, and they are consistent in their approach. Physical intervention has been used on one occasion to keep the child safe. However, due to lack of key information in the report, the manager has not been able to evaluate the incident to see if the hold used was appropriate.

Positive behaviour is supported in the home. Staff talk to children about their feelings to help them understand their behaviour. When consequences to behaviour have been used, records show that the approach is restorative. There is clear management oversight to ensure that these are fair and effective.

The manager ensures that all health and safety checks are carried out. During the inspection, there were minor repairs identified. The manager took swift action and some of these were completed. However, there are still issues regarding a child's bedroom furniture that need to be addressed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is experienced, child-focused and aspirational. She has good management oversight of the day-to-day running of the home. The manager ensures that there is a stable staff team in place, which provides consistency for children. Staff said that they enjoy working at the home and feel supported by the manager.

The manager has strong working relationships with other professionals and there is clear communication and multi-agency working. The manager sends out monthly reports and attends regular meetings to ensure that they are all working together to meet the needs of children.

The manager recently completed a review of the quality of care provided. She obtained feedback from children and professionals. However, she did not give an opportunity for parents or staff to give feedback. This has meant that she has not had a full overview of the care provided.

There is a comprehensive training programme in place. The manager ensures that staff receive the relevant training to meet the individual needs of children. The manager also invites other key specialists into the home to conduct group training with staff. This ensures that staff are equipped to deliver a high standard of consistent care to children.

Supervisions and appraisals take place in the appropriate timescale. Staff can have an opportunity to reflect on their practice and this helps to develop their knowledge and skills. The manager has developed the appraisal form to ensure that staff are appraised on their role, and responsibilities and developmental areas are clearly identified to help and support them to develop their practice.

Team meetings take place regularly and this gives staff an opportunity to share experience and knowledge. The manager invites other professionals, such as an external therapeutic support service, to attend the meetings regularly to offer advice and guidance to staff. This helps the staff to develop their knowledge and meet the needs of children.

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 registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	8 July 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are clear records of the specific physical intervention holds used and their duration, other people present, and the effectiveness of the measure used.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is maintained and that any hazards identified are quickly repaired, such as the damage to a child's wardrobe door and bedroom drawers. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are undertaking planned direct work to support children in meeting their needs identified in the care plans. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 16, paragraph 3.14)
- The registered person should ensure that they have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulations at least every six months. This should include feedback from parents and staff. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: SC037657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Children's Services, Huyton Municipal Buildings, 6th Floor, Huyton, Knowsley, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Karen Jude

Registered manager: Teri Hannon

Inspector

Simon Jones, Social Care Inspector

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