

SC037670

Registered provider: Knowsley 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 to provide short breaks for up to two children at a time who may be experiencing social or emotional difficulties. The staff also provide outreach support to children and their families or carers in the community.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were accessing the short break service and they spent time with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2020.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 March 2026

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: 5 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2025	Full	Good
20/03/2024	Full	Good
08/12/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide children and their families with a high level of individualised support, which includes short-break care and community-based support sessions in the evenings. This enables the children to benefit from positive experiences while they are away from the family home.

Staff introduce children to the home at the child's own pace. Children visit with their families and gradually increase their time in the home until they feel ready for overnight stays.

Children are cared for by nurturing and dedicated staff who know them well and are committed to making a positive difference. Children are supported to build trusting relationships with the adults who care for them.

Children benefit from intense and focused direct-work sessions, which are carried out during their short breaks. This work contributes directly to each family's wider support plan and helps children remain living at home with their parents and carers.

Although parents retain responsibility for their child's health, staff have a good understanding of children's health needs. They regularly discuss issues such as diabetes management, healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. This means that children receive the information they need to make positive and informed lifestyle choices.

Staff regularly encourage children to express their wishes and feelings, including choosing menus and activities they wish to be involved in. They also support children to attend care meetings or advocate on their behalf to ensure their views are heard. The manager ensures that children can access an advocate when needed. One professional said, 'Staff have built such positive relationships with the child. The child can now express their feelings and lived experiences, something they previously struggled to do.'

Staff have built positive relationships and have regular communication with children's families. This enables staff to understand the family dynamics and identify shared areas of support. As a result, children experience continuity of care and routine during their stays.

Staff promote children's skills and interests by providing opportunities to access activities they otherwise could not experience without this service. These include go-karting, swimming, the driving range, snooker, music studio sessions and day trips. These opportunities broaden children's life experiences.

Staff support children to develop age-appropriate independence skills, such as cooking, doing their laundry and completing small tasks around the home. These experiences build children's confidence in preparing for the future.

Staff celebrate children's achievements by displaying their artwork around the home and creating memory books filled with photos of activities they have enjoyed. This helps children to have a strong sense of identity and helps to build their confidence and self-esteem.

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

Staff prioritise keeping children safe during their short-break stays. They have a strong understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and identify concerns quickly. The manager shares information promptly with children's social workers and other key professionals. Staff contribute effectively to multi-agency planning and this coordinated approach reduces risks to children.

Staff understand each child's strengths, risks and vulnerabilities. Before a child accesses the service, the manager works with professionals and parents to develop clear risk assessments that provide comprehensive guidance and strategies for staff. This ensures that children remain safe during their stay.

Children said that they feel safe in the home and when out with staff in the community. They can identify a person they would speak to if they had any worries or concerns. Parents and professionals also provide positive feedback, stating that children enjoy their stays and are well cared for.

Staff maintain effective partnerships with all professional agencies to ensure that children receive the best possible help and support. Significant incidents are not a regular occurrence at this home. Since the last inspection, there have not been any safeguarding incidents, complaints, allegations, or missing-from-home incidents.

Staff encourage positive behaviour by having regular discussion with children so they have a better understanding of how their actions can affect others and may place them at risk. This allows children to start making safer, more positive choices.

The manager ensures that the physical environment is maintained to a good standard. It is warm, welcoming and has a relaxed atmosphere. Children's bedrooms are decorated in a child friendly theme, and children choose which bedroom they would like during their stay.

The manager is trained in the safer recruitment of staff. However, there were shortfalls in the recruitment checks for one staff member.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is child centred, caring and has an excellent knowledge about the children. She strives to ensure the best possible outcomes and is supported in her role by an equally experienced deputy manager. Together they provide consistency for both children and staff.

The manager maintains effective systems that give her clear oversight of daily practice. She uses internal and external monitoring well to identify strengths and areas for development in the care provided. She acts promptly to address shortfalls and drives continuous improvement.

A committed staff team works well together. Staff are child-centred, enthusiastic, dedicated and they understand each child's individual needs. Morale is high and staff speak positively about the support they receive from management. One staff member said, 'I am lucky to work with a great team and we have a supportive manager and deputy manager. The staff all work well together, and our managers are approachable, helpful and lead by example.'

Staff receive regular supervision sessions and annual appraisals from the management team. This provides opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice, share their experiences and identify any areas for further development.

Staff receive a comprehensive training programme that is aligned to the needs of the children accessing the service. Staff said that they value this training and that it equips them with the skills and confidence to meet children's needs. However, not all staff have achieved the required qualifications in expected timescales.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings. This provides the staff team with an opportunity to spend time together and share information. The manager also invites other professionals to these meetings to offer further support and advice to staff in meeting children's emotional needs. This provides consistency for the children.

The manager has developed positive relationships with parents and professionals. She regularly attends and contributes to core group meetings, working in partnership to ensure that children and families receive the support that they need.

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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home, if the individual satisfies the requirements The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the	4 May 2026

date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016;

works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis.

(Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is a full employment history of all staff who work in the home and any gaps in employment are scrutinised and evidence of this is recorded.

In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff that work in the home in a care role have obtained their relevant qualification by the relevant date.

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: SC037670

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Children's Regulatory Services, 1st Floor Nutgrove Villa, Huyton Municipal Building, c/o Postroom, Archway Road, Huyton, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Karen Jude

Registered manager: Tracy Burke

Inspector

Simon Jones, Social Care Inspector

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