

# SC039900

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to 7 children with learning and physical disabilities.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2009 and is suitably qualified and experienced. A new responsible individual is in post, and Ofsted is in the process of assessing their suitability for the role.

### Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2026

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 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:** 26 February 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 26/02/2025      | Full            | Good                 |
| 02/08/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 22/11/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 14/09/2021      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The inspector saw all four children and spent time with three of them as part of the inspection.

Children are making progress, and their day-to-day experiences are positive. One parent explained that if they had one wish, it would be for their child to live at the home forever because the care they receive is 'the best'.

Staff speak about the children with warmth and affection. Children naturally approach staff, who respond attentively to their needs. This demonstrates that children are at the centre of staff practice, which helps them feel secure. One child told inspectors that they love their home.

One child lived in the home for eight years, and they recently moved on in line with their care plan. Their transition was well planned and progressed at a pace that reflected their individual needs. The child has continued to stay in contact with staff since moving on, which evidences the strong relationships developed over time.

In contrast, two children's recent moves into the home were not well planned. The children moved into the home in an emergency. Care planning was insufficient, and the manager did not have enough time to explore potential risks, gather the views of the children already living at the home, or consider the potential effect this change would have on them. This has caused the children to feel unsettled and could have compromised their experiences and safety.

There is a strong sense of the children throughout the home. Their photos, toys and belongings are visible throughout, reinforcing that this is their home. The environment is spacious, with several communal areas, including a soft playroom and a large garden with play equipment. Children's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their individual identities, helping them feel valued.

Children's health needs are met. Staff know how to manage the children's health conditions, including epilepsy. Arrangements for managing children's medication are safe, and children receive it as prescribed. Children have access to the healthcare services they need, and collaborative working with healthcare professionals promotes and supports good health.

Children benefit from a wide range of social opportunities. They have fun, try new experiences, and participate in activities that build their confidence and broaden their horizons, such as attending music concerts, meeting well-known public figures and going to football matches. These experiences enhance children's wellbeing and contribute to their personal development.

Staff use creative methods to capture children's views and feelings, tailoring their approach to each child's communication style and level of understanding. This direct work continues to develop as the team strengthens how children contribute to decisions about their lives. In addition, children's views are heard and acted on. One child described choosing the colour of their bedroom wall, and when they asked for a new drum kit, staff ensured that this was provided. This shows that children's voices are valued, and they influence their care.

Children are helped to develop their independence skills. One child makes their bed, and another child has learned to make hot chocolate. These are significant achievements and reflect children's progress from their starting points.

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

Children report feeling safe in their home. One child identified trusted adults they talk to when they feel worried or upset. Another child smiled and gave the inspector a 'high five' when discussing how safe they feel. A parent commented, 'He is 100% safe. I have peace of mind knowing he is well looked after.'

Safeguarding practice is robust. Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously, and they know how to recognise and report concerns in accordance with procedures. This is a good safety net for the children. Safeguarding concerns are extremely rare, and staff remain alert to any signs that children may be at risk of harm.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted using praise and rewards, and children's achievements are recognised and celebrated. This supportive approach helps children develop and maintain good daily routines. A social worker reported that this has contributed to an improvement in a child's behaviour at school.

Staff understand the individual risks that children face. They know the children well and look beyond their unwanted behaviours, recognising them as forms of communication. Staff are skilled and work proactively to manage situations when children become upset or frustrated. They intervene promptly and in line with children's plans. As a result, incidents are de-escalated swiftly, reducing the likelihood of harm.

As a result of positive and trusting relationships between children and staff, incidents infrequently escalate to the point where physical restraint is required. This has happened once since the last inspection and was necessary and proportionate to keep the child safe.

Clear records of incidents and children's behaviours are maintained. However, some of the language used in the records does not support children. The manager is taking action to address this.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is led by a dedicated and experienced manager who wants the best for children. He is supported by a committed child-focused deputy. They take pride in their roles, and together they are a strong team.

The manager has good oversight of the home and of children's care. Monitoring systems are effective, and as a result, he clearly understands the home's strengths and areas for development. This enables him to maintain a well-rounded view of children's experiences and progress.

Positive relationships are maintained with parents and social workers, and their feedback is consistently positive. Parents feel involved, and two social workers highlighted communication and information-sharing as strengths of the home.

Monthly team meetings are held, which are well attended. These meetings provide staff with valuable opportunities to reflect on practice, share learning, and receive updates about the home and wider organisation.

Staff enjoy their jobs and value the support and guidance they receive from their managers, which helps them carry out their roles effectively. Arrangements for staff supervision are effective, which provides staff with opportunities to continually develop their practice.

Retention of staff is good. Many of the staff have worked at the home for several years, which provides consistency and stability for children. New staff members receive an effective induction to help them understand their roles and responsibilities.

Staff receive various training to help them safely care for children and meet their needs. Training on topics such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is tailored to the specific needs of the children living at the home.

## 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     |
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| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.<br/>(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children are only admitted in line with the home's statement of purpose. Care planning for any new children must be robust and informed by a thorough assessment, ensuring that children's needs can be met and that risks are assessed and understood to promote their safety and welfare.</p> <p>Furthermore, to ensure that any changes to the group dynamics do not compromise children's safety or well-being, the views and needs of the children already living at the home, as well as the potential impact on them, should be considered.</p> | 6 March 2026 |

### Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information about individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between facts and opinions. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the

Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## **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:** SC039900

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

**Registered provider address:** Council House, Priory Road, Dudley DY1 1HF

**Responsible individual:**

**Registered manager:** Mark Bates

## Inspector

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector



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