

SC373044

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a large charitable organisation. It provides care for up to four children who may have learning disabilities, and social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025. They are also registered for another home operated by the company.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 July 2025

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: 6 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/08/2024	Full	Good
31/07/2023	Full	Good
26/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are well supported when moving in and out of the home. Since the last inspection, two children have been supported to move in, and one young person supported to move on to adult care. The manager and placing authority have worked together to ensure that children have their wishes considered to identify the best support for them. However, documentation of the support provided during the move-in process has not been sufficiently robust.

Staff support children to develop their interests. Staff use various communication tools to help children access activities they are interested in. Staff are patient in their approach and allow the children time to process what is being asked of them. Children's disabilities are acknowledged and supported and not seen as a barrier to them having good and fulfilling life experiences.

Children benefit from imaginative, sensory-based activities. Staff are resourceful and creative. They actively seek opportunities for children to engage in important childhood activities, such as becoming confident on play equipment, playing games and sensory play. The provider's school also offers summer holiday activities, these include swimming, dancing, gym activities. This gives children chance to meet with their friends.

Staff help children to spend time with people who are important to them. The manager advocates for children and supports increased time with loved ones. This ensures that children maintain important relationships.

Children live in a spacious and warm environment where they can decorate and personalise their bedrooms. Staff support children by incorporating their sensory needs into daily care. Staff actively seek the children's views before making any changes to the home. However, some areas of the home have not been well maintained, and wear and tear to the property has not been addressed in a timely way. The lack of quick action detracts from creating a homely environment.

Children are engaged in full-time education, and they are all making progress. Staff and managers work very closely with education colleagues. Through this multi-agency working, children are receiving support to manage lifelong conditions.

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

Children are closely supervised and supported according to their assessed needs. Staff prioritise safety in daily practice, and parents and professionals confirm they understand and protect the children well. Safety measures, such as high staffing levels and locked doors are based on individual risk assessments and are thoroughly documented. The manager regularly reviews these assessments to ensure they remain effective.

Staff only hold children as a last resort to keep everyone safe. Staff have received appropriate training and discuss incidents with children, to understand the reasons for the behaviour and prevent reoccurrence.

Children are supported by staff who know them well. Staff respond well to any behaviours that challenge and are committed to finding different and innovative ways to manage situations that children may find difficult to cope with. This approach reduces children's anxieties and helps to minimise incidents.

Children's care records, plans and assessments capture their experiences and help staff better understand their needs and required support. While the high quality of these records generally enhances care, the manager has not identified inconsistencies in the records documenting how staff support children who are either non-verbal or have limited verbal communication. These gaps make it harder to track children's progress in sharing their views.

Staff work collaboratively with other professionals, parents and carers to understand children's complex needs. Managers and staff are strong advocates for children. Staff communicate well with relevant professionals to provide an all-round approach to children's care.

Staff understand the importance of meeting children's health needs. There is a well-managed system for administering and recording medications in a safe and controlled way. There are comprehensive risk assessments concerning health, and staff are well informed about children's health requirements, effectively managing associated risks, including allergies. However, additional measures are needed to ensure that all visitors are aware of the nut-free policy, enhancing allergen protection for one of the children.

Staff complete a broad range of good-quality safeguarding training. There is good communication with safeguarding partners in the local authority. Managers are aware of the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities for disabled children and what inherent risk factors may look like. Staff understand the importance of an open safeguarding culture and, as a result, know how to recognise, report and act on any safeguarding concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is a determined leader with high expectations for the standard of care provided to children. The management team takes immense pride in their roles, showing a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children. They serve as strong role models, leading staff by example.

The manager works effectively with other professionals to ensure that children receive well-planned, consistent care. Professionals speak highly of the manager and are confident in the staff team's ability to meet children's needs.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive from the leadership team. One member of staff said, 'It's an amazing place to work and wish I had come here earlier. Everything is so child centred; I really am loving working here.'

The manager and staff have worked diligently to ensure that children feel welcomed and supported according to their individual needs. One child has many health complexities. They demonstrated unwavering dedication, ensuring that health needs were fully assessed prior to them moving to the home. One professional remarked, '[Name of child] is looked after very well — staff know his needs, provide great support, and ensure he is safe and happy in his environment. He has made remarkable progress.'

Managers provide regular supervision to staff, and team meetings are well attended. Staff describe leadership as supportive. New staff receive thorough inductions, including mentoring from experienced colleagues, and extra support during probation to clarify their roles. However, annual appraisals have not been completed in line with the statement of purpose.

The staff team is stable. One member of staff said, 'We are the [name of home] family; we get on well together.' Staff feel involved and listened to. The inspector observed staff practice as caring and warm. This helps create a happy and relaxed environment for children. One foster carer said, 'They take good care of [name of child]; we have nothing but praise for the staff.'

The manager understands the strengths and areas of improvement. They have implemented systems to improve their oversight through regular auditing and evaluation. This is improving practice in several areas and means that staff provide better care for children. The manager has met the requirements made at the last inspection.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(b)(vii)) Leaders must ensure that wear and tear to the home is identified and rectified in a timely way.	20 August 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) The registered person must ensure that children's case records contain up-to-date information about the child and the support offered by staff, specifically in relation to children's communication needs, and how staff have supported children to share their views.	20 August 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development;	20 August 2025

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and

have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))

Leaders and managers must ensure that all staff have individual appraisals once per year. This appraisal should consider, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all visitors are aware that the home is a nut free home so that no food item is brought into the home containing nuts. This is due to one child's health needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: SC373044

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Registered provider address: Birtenshaw Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton BL7 9AB

Responsible individual: David Reid

Registered manager: Stephanie Stanley

Inspector

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

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