

SC470797

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, physical disabilities, and/or sensory impairment. At the time of the inspection, there were two children living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2023.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 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: 17 September 2024

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
17/09/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/08/2023	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Good
05/10/2021	Full	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 young people have been supported with their move to adult care, and two new children have started visiting the home as part of their moving-in plan. The manager and placing authority have worked together to ensure that each child and young person's wishes are considered when identifying the best support for them.

Children are looked after by caring and committed staff who know them well. Positive relationships between staff and families are built on regular, open communication, which helps ensure consistent care for the children. Staff actively support children to maintain close connections with family and loved ones. They also value and encourage parents' involvement in supporting their child's care at home.

Staff support children by encouraging their interests and helping them access activities they enjoy. They use different communication tools to ensure each child can get involved. Staff take a patient and thoughtful approach, giving children the time they need to understand what is being asked. Disabilities are recognised and supported, never viewed as obstacles. Instead, every child is given the opportunity to enjoy meaningful and fulfilling experiences.

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

The children attend the same school, which is run by the provider. Staff ensure that children attend school as agreed in their care plans. Staff have good relationships with the children's school. Effective handovers between school and the staff at the home help to ensure that children receive continuity and consistency of care.

Children have memory books that capture their time from when they started to receive support up until when they leave. This helps to provide children with good memories of their time in the home.

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, wear and tear to the property has not been undertaken in a timely way. The lack of quick action detracts from creating a homely environment.

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

Children are carefully supervised and supported based on their individual needs. Staff make safety a daily priority, parents and professionals agree that children are well cared for and protected. Safety measures, like having extra staff and keeping doors locked, are guided by detailed risk assessments. These are carefully documented and regularly reviewed by the manager to make sure they stay effective.

The manager ensures that children's care plans are up to date and appropriate for each child. Staff support children with their emotional well-being. Clear plans help to guide staff in how to care for children when they feel upset, worried or anxious. Staff can quickly identify when something is not right for a child.

Staff respond effectively to behaviours that challenge, demonstrating a commitment to finding innovative ways to help children manage difficult situations. This approach reduces children's anxieties and minimises incidents.

Staff only use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure the safety of all involved. They are appropriately trained and, following any incident, engage with the child to understand the behaviour and help prevent recurrence. However, on one occasion, the follow-up discussion with the child was delayed. Additionally, the manager failed to identify inaccuracies in staff records on two separate occasions.

Staff are trained in safeguarding and work closely with local teams to protect children. Managers understand the additional risks that disabled children may face and know how to respond. Staff foster a transparent culture, enabling them to confidently identify and address concerns. A social worker praised the manager's clear communication and highlighted the child's significant progress.

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. Both the manager and staff benefit from the support of very child-focused senior team leaders. 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.

There have been some changes in the staff team. However, the staff team is now consistent and stable. When there have been vacancies, these have been covered by the existing staff team or staff from within the organisation who the children are familiar with. Staff say the manager is approachable and they feel valued.

The manager has a good understanding of the progress children make. They spend time with children on a regular basis, which helps them to measure progress. Additionally, the manager completes a regular review of care to highlight children's progress and to evaluate children's care. One staff member said, 'We have great support from a very experienced manager, whose main focus is improving the lives of children.'

There is a range of core training and specialised training available to help staff meet children's needs. All training is up to date. New staff receive a thorough induction that provides them with a detailed programme of training and guidance in their new role. Managers provide regular supervision to staff, and team meetings are well attended. Staff supervision is focused on the wellbeing, personal development, and the care of the children.

Managers conduct appraisals with staff on an annual basis. Staff reflect on their work and set targets for the year ahead. However, the appraisals do not include the views of children or key individuals. This limits the manager's understanding of children's experiences and the ability of leaders to make improvements.

Leaders and managers work collaboratively with external professionals and individuals, such as social workers, teachers and parents. A parent said, '[name of child]. Has made so much progress, 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 recommendation 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, 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— 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)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all factual recordings of physical interventions provide a clear description of the hold used, and that the records must be reviewed to confirm accuracy and to identify any shortfalls.	20 August 2025

In particular, the registered person must ensure that when conversations take place with children following the use of physical intervention, that they are timely.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(vii)(viii)(c)(i)(ii)) 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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that appraisals for staff 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. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: SC470797

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: Angela Foster

Inspector

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

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