

1269505

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately run and provides support and care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2023.

There were three children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 30 June and 1 July 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2024	Full	Good
26/09/2023	Full	Good
31/01/2023	Full	Good
09/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

At the time of this inspection, three children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, one child had moved out and two children had moved in. One child spoke with the inspector and contributed to the inspection. One child was away from the home.

Children's experiences and progress are varied but all children have made some progress from their individual starting points. However, there are shortfalls that need to be addressed before children are receiving consistently good support.

Some areas of the home detract from the overall homeliness. For example, the entrance carpet is worn and has food stains on it, and one of the shower rooms has worn linoleum and a build-up of limescale. One child said they 'choose not to shower in this room because it looks horrible'. Children contribute to how they would like their bedrooms decorated; however, one child's room had several holes in the wall.

Children do not have full access to the home. There are communal areas of the home that are locked when not being used for specific purposes such as education or therapy. In addition, door alarms are used throughout the home but are not subject to regular review or individually assessed. The lack of review means that staff cannot be assured that these restrictions are proportionate or justified.

Adults know the children well and talk about them with care and compassion. Interactions demonstrate warmth, laughter and mutual respect.

Staff provide age-appropriate childhood experiences for children, such as celebrating birthdays, Christmas and other seasonal events. Staff celebrate children's individual achievements. Children's time at the home is captured with high-quality memory books. These make children feel valued and will provide them with timeless, lasting memories.

Staff offer children a range of activities that support their interests. Children have taken part in playing basketball, going horse riding and going on trips to theme parks and the cinema.

Staff support children to see family members and other people who are important to them. Staff have supported one child to re-establish relationships with a family member they have not seen for a long time and to increase the time they spend with another.

Staff understand the importance of education. They encourage children to persevere with their education. Staff adapt their approach and create bespoke educational support packages for individuals. This has seen an increase in attendance for two children, contributing to one child being able to sit their exams.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff have some understanding of children's individual risks. However, they have not always taken proactive steps to ensure children are safeguarded effectively.

Staff do not always follow children's individual missing-from-home procedures. Although steps are taken to locate children, known preventative measures are not always carried out, such as contacting the British Transport Police. On one occasion, when an address was provided, staff did not go there to try to locate the child. This impeded the timely return of the child and led to further opportunities for them to be at risk of harm.

On one occasion, a child returned home under the influence of alcohol. Staff checked on the child regularly but did not seek medical advice until advised to do so by the manager. This contributed to a significant delay, which could have resulted in repercussions for the child's health and well-being.

Staff and managers have made some efforts to support children to reduce their smoking and substance misuse. Although conversations are held with children, staff do not always take available opportunities to discuss and explore areas of specific concern with children. Additionally, staff and managers have not used external support to help address concerns around substance misuse and the consequential fire safety risks. This is a missed opportunity to help children learn how to manage situations and keep themselves safe.

Staff use consequences to manage behaviour. These are not always used consistently or recorded or reviewed. This affects the manager's ability to ensure proportionality and effectiveness.

Children have had unsafe items in their room. Staff have carried out appropriate room searches to remove items to help keep children safe.

For one child, there has been a significant concern in relation to a specific risk. Staff have responded with professional curiosity, care and compassion. Staff sought immediate medical attention and provided stability for this child during an extremely difficult time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is run by a permanent and qualified manager. The manager has high aspirations and is committed to providing a nurturing environment in which children can thrive. However, improvement is needed before these aspirations are being consistently achieved.

Appraisals for staff take place. These lack feedback from other professionals and children. This means opportunities to capture and explore objective overviews of the staff member's performance and areas for development are reduced.

The home's statement of purpose was shared with Ofsted in February 2025. This contained information that was conflicting or outdated. The requirements for new employees' initial support are not being consistently implemented in practice.

Management oversight is not consistently effective. On occasion, children's records have missed out important details.

Staff say they feel well supported by the manager and that she is approachable and present in the home. Consequently, staff morale is high. Professionals talk positively about the support offered to children and feel that children have made progress.

For established staff, supervision sessions are regular and reflective. This helps staff to feel fully supported in their roles and with their continual professional development.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi))	31 July 2025
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	31 July 2025
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16 (3)(a))	3 October 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. In particular, when consequences are being used, these are to be consistent, proportionate to the behaviour and subject to regular scrutiny to monitor their effectiveness. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that, just as in a family home, children are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home, and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, when 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: 1269505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Registered provider address: Coach House, White House Court, Hockliffe Street,
Leighton Buzzard LU7 1FD

Responsible individual: Claudette Rudman

Registered manager: Natalija Balatunovic

Inspector

Naomi Starbuck, Social Care Inspector

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