

1269565

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is part of a specialist school providing residential care and a short-break service. The home can provide care for up to five children with learning disabilities.

The home registered in January 2018.

The registered manager post has been vacant since 17 July 2025. The provider has employed a new manager who is yet to apply to register.

The responsible individual left at the end of August 2025. The provider has not yet appointed a new person for this role.

At the time of this inspection, there were two young people aged 18 living at the home. One young person and three children occasionally stay at the home for short breaks.

The school was closed for the summer holidays. The inspector reviewed records that showed joint working with school staff to support children's social care and well-being.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 September 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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 28 August 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2024	Full	Good
11/10/2023	Full	Good
15/11/2022	Full	Good
23/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children live and stay in a caring and supportive home where their individual needs are well understood. Staff provide warm and consistent care, helping children feel safe, valued and settled. This helps children to build trusting relationships with staff.

Children's care plans include clear strategies to help them achieve positive outcomes. Staff use communication methods and aids that enable children to express their wishes and feelings. This helps children make choices and feel included and respected.

Education is promoted well, and staff actively encourage children to attend the linked school. The school's proximity makes it easier for staff to support children's attendance. One child's attendance and enjoyment of school have gradually improved due to staff's consistent efforts in taking them to school, even when they are late or can only stay for part of the school day.

Children are supported to enjoy a wide range of activities suited to their abilities and interests. This includes sensory play, creative projects and community-based activities that promote independence and social inclusion. Some children enjoyed a holiday when they stayed away for several nights. These experiences enhance children's quality of life and enable them to develop new skills.

The home environment is safe. The bedrooms of children who live in the home are personalised with their chosen colours, pictures and belongings. For children staying on short breaks, staff know which bedrooms they prefer, and ensure that these are available. The layout of the home accommodates children's sensory and physical needs, helping them to feel comfortable.

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

Children are protected effectively. Staff are well trained in safeguarding children with complex needs, including recognising non-verbal signs of distress or changes in behaviour that may indicate harm. Staff are alert to the different risks and act quickly to provide close supervision when necessary.

Staff use positive behaviour support approaches to help children calm and recover in a safe and respectful way. Staff understand how children's disabilities may affect their behaviour and respond with patience and comfort. Physical interventions are rare and only used when necessary to prevent harm.

Risks assessments help staff to understand how to minimise risks in a consistent way. However, one risk assessment contained inconsistent information that could confuse staff and increase risk. There was no evidence that the child was harmed as a result.

Partnership working with external agencies is strong. Managers work closely with school staff, health professionals, social workers and specialist disability teams to ensure that safeguarding concerns are well managed. This approach strengthens the provider's safeguarding processes.

The provider generally carries out employment checks to ensure staff suitability. However, records do not consistently demonstrate that employment references are verified, and some staff files lack evidence that all required checks have been completed. This inconsistency in record-keeping undermines confidence in the thoroughness of safer recruitment processes.

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

The registered manager resigned in July and the responsible individual resigned in August, causing some initial uncertainty among staff. A new manager, two newly appointed senior service managers and a new consultant with relevant experience have recently started and are providing improved leadership and oversight. Their support is helping to maintain stability and staff confidence, despite changes at senior management level.

The provider has not yet appointed a new responsible individual, and the new manager has not yet applied to register. In the meantime, the leader of the trust that runs the linked school is supporting leaders and managers until a suitable responsible individual is appointed. Having previously been the responsible individual, they understand the requirements of this role, helping to ensure effective regulatory oversight of the home.

The trustees of the school have given notice for the home to relocate by the beginning of December 2025. A new home has been identified and the provider is working to finalise lease agreements. Once these are in place, leaders plan to apply to register the new home.

Staff have shared information about the home's closure with children, young people, parents and placing authorities. The two young people currently living in the home are approaching the natural transition to adult services due to their age, and staff are supporting them to prepare for this move. Social workers are seeking appropriate adult placements, in line with each young person's care plan. One social worker has raised concerns that inconsistent information from staff is making it difficult to complete detailed referrals to adult services. They are addressing this directly with the new management team.

Records management is poor. Some children's care records contain inconsistent and inappropriate information. For example, one child's risk assessment included another child's name multiple times. Furthermore, several records are missing up-to-date information from placing authorities, such as care review reports, education, health and care plans, and personal education plans. One record also failed to use age-appropriate language when describing the support a child needs with personal care. These shortfalls

hinder effective person-centred planning and support for children. Managers have developed a plan to identify, assess and address these shortfalls.

The manager's review of the quality of care is not always comprehensive. The report lacks detailed information about children's progress and does not consistently include the views of children, parents, placing authorities or staff. This limits opportunities to develop the home and enhance the quality of care children receive.

Staff are positive about the new management team. Although the managers are new, staff believe their experience and approach will be beneficial. The managers have begun introductory supervision meetings with staff. Staff also say that they have consistently felt well supported through regular supervision and training. This is reflected in the positive relationships staff have with children.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the manager submits an application to register and that a responsible individual is appointed. Managers should also review the accuracy of children's care records, ensuring that they contain up-to-date information from placing authorities, including but not limited to, reports of care reviews, education, health and care plans, and personal education plans.	31 October 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review set out in regulation 45 focuses on the experiences of children living in the home and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. The review should include feedback from children and young people, parents, staff and social workers. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in

a non-stigmatising way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

- The registered person should ensure that they maintain good employment practice. This includes verification of employment references and ensuring that information about checks undertaken is in staff files. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: 1269565

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Thobekile Bandama, Social Care Inspector

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