

2618755

Registered provider: Young Birch Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company owns this home. It is registered for up to three children who may have social and/or emotional needs.

The registered manager has been in place since October 2021 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 August 2023

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: 4 May 2022

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
04/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
03/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home. This was a carefully planned move for the child. This was a positive experience for the child and helped the child to feel less anxious moving into the home. At the time of the inspection, the three children living in the home said that they were happy. The children described it as a good home, and said that they feel well cared for. One child said this home is 'one of the best I have been in'.

Children's health needs are met. Staff promote the health and well-being of the children in their care. Healthcare plans clearly outline the needs of the children. Staff advocate and support children to access additional specialist support when required. For example, staff have made referrals to the local mental health services for children to have additional support to meet their individual emotional needs.

Children have made good progress in their education. All the children attend education and have good attendance levels. Staff encourage children to be ambitious for their futures. One child told the inspector that his future education wishes are to go to university. Staff and education providers work together to help children achieve the best education outcomes.

Children have developed positive and trusting relationships with staff. One child told the inspector: 'Staff are nice and I do trust them.' During the inspection, staff and children were observed playing basketball in the garden, having humorous interactions.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are sought through regular children's key-work sessions and in weekly children's meetings. The children are consulted daily about all aspects of their care. The children attend their reviews and have further opportunities to voice their wishes. This helps children to influence the care that they receive, as well as knowing that their opinions are important, which increases self-esteem.

Staff support children to develop their independence skills. Staff help children to budget and encourage them with carrying out daily independence tasks, such as taking responsibility for their laundry, cleaning their bedrooms and making simple meals. These tasks support children to build independence skills and prepare them for adult life.

Staff help children to spend time with those who are important to them, such as family and friends, and ensure that safe and meaningful contact takes place when appropriate. This approach helps children to maintain relationships with people who are significant in their lives.

The children's home is welcoming and well decorated. Photos of the children and of celebrations are displayed throughout the home, and children's bedrooms are personalised and comfortably furnished. However, the kitchen and lounge doors are

locked every night, preventing children from accessing this area if they need a drink or a snack. There are also window restrictors on the ground-floor windows, despite there being no concerns about the children going missing from home. This detracts from the homely feel and prevents children achieving a sense of belonging.

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

Children say that they feel safe, and that staff help them to stay safe. The children can identify adults whom they can speak to should they have any worries or concerns; one child told the inspector that he liked all the staff but did have his favourites who he can go to.

Since the last inspection, there have been no episodes of children going missing, safeguarding concerns or physical interventions incidents in this home. This is a testament to the positive and trusting relationships that staff have developed with the children. Staff have a good understanding of children's behaviours and are able to de-escalate children's behaviour if required. There are clear plans and protocols in place that tell staff what actions staff should take if any serious incidents do occur.

Children do not experience bullying in the home. All three children went on holiday together. Staff showed the inspector photos of children doing activities and enjoying each other's company on this trip. The staff help children to develop mutual respect and live in harmony. These experiences will be invaluable for the children in the long term.

Safer recruitment processes are managed effectively. There is a structure in place to ensure that all required checks are completed and recorded. This significantly reduces the potential for unsuitable people to work at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is experienced and suitably qualified. He is passionate and child-focused. Children are at the centre of everything he does. The manager makes a point of spending time with the children and the children have a good relationship with him.

There is a stable staff team. As the manager is in the process of recruiting more staff, bank staff are used to support the staff team. The same bank staff are used to cover shifts; they know the children and staff team well. As a result, the children are being cared for by adults with whom they have an established relationship.

The manager and staff maintain effective partnerships with all professionals to ensure that children benefit from effective help and support. One social worker told the inspector: 'I have good communication with the home, staff are nurturing, and I have confidence that they will be able to meet the child's needs'.

Most of the staff are provided with the training they need. However, one staff member has not completed their refresher safeguarding training; this is four months out of

date. Another staff member has not started their relevant qualification, which means this staff member will be out of timescale in completing this qualification. As a result, children may not receive individualised care from suitably qualified members of staff.

The manager supports staff through supervision; however, no staff have had their annual appraisal. This is a missed opportunity for staff to receive feedback on their performance and plan for their development.

The manager's internal monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying and responding to the weaknesses of staff practice within the home. The manager failed to identify and respond to shortfalls in record-keeping. For example, one child's consequence record did not reflect the actual action staff had taken, and the information recorded was not clear and factual. This impacts on the manager's oversight of the quality of care provided to the children.

The manager has identified that his oversight processes are ineffective, and this is an area of development. He is putting plans in place to address this. The manager showed the inspector a monitoring tool he has devised to capture children's care and progress and the home's development. This tool is yet to be embedded.

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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1) (a)(b) (2)(c)(h)) This specifically relates to the monitoring of records and staff training.	29 September 2023
The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c)) This specifically relates to the manager ensuring that staff receive an annual appraisal.	29 September 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home provides a nurturing, supportive and homely environment that meets the needs of the children. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression, specifically in relation to ground-floor window restrictors

and the locking of lounge and kitchen doors. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The registered person should ensure that just as in a family home, children are able to access all shared areas of their home, at all times. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- 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. This in relation to the record of consequences. ('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: 2618755

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Young Birch Limited

Registered provider address: 4 Station Avenue, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 9HS

Responsible individual: Mark Easie

Registered manager: Nigel Rowe

Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

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