

2618755

Registered provider: Young Birch Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to three children who have social and emotional difficulties. There were two children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 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	inadequate
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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: 26 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/11/2024	Full	Good
15/08/2023	Full	Good
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: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home and one has moved out. Children's experiences of transitions into and out of the home are mixed. The child who moved out experienced a planned transition into semi-independent living. In contrast, the child who moved into the home underwent a rapid transition, despite there being sufficient time to facilitate a more gradual and child-centred process.

Staff promote children's engagement with education. For one child, staff provide transport to and from school. Another child, who is currently unable to attend school, receives support from staff to engage in education within the home. During the inspection, positive and nurturing interactions were observed while the child participated in educational activities.

Staff support children to develop independence skills. However, they have not consistently advocated on behalf of children when services they are entitled to have not been provided. For example, one child preparing for independence had not been allocated a personal adviser (PA), and staff did not escalate this issue with the placing authority. As a result, the child missed an opportunity to access support that could have assisted their transition into adulthood.

Staff efforts to involve children in recreational activities are limited. Children are not routinely offered opportunities to participate in a broad range of social or extra-curricular activities. One child's social worker noted that the child had not been supported to access structured activities where they could socialise in a supervised setting.

The home provides a welcoming and comfortable environment. A spacious kitchen overlooks a large garden, which is being developed for children's use. Garden furniture has been purchased, and there are plans to convert a summerhouse into a games room. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms to reflect their individual preferences.

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

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the risks associated with individual children and know how to escalate safeguarding concerns appropriately. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated following incidents and when new information becomes available.

The use of physical restraint is rare. Medication is managed safely, and there have been no reported medication errors since the last inspection.

When children go missing, staff respond in a coordinated and timely manner. They take appropriate action to search for children and notify relevant safeguarding agencies. Return home interviews are arranged and completed within the required timescales.

Recruitment procedures are not consistently robust. In one instance, a telephone verification check was not completed when an applicant disclosed that their previous employment, involving work with vulnerable individuals, had ended during the probationary period. This oversight limits the manager's ability to fully assess the applicant's suitability to work with children.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home is managed by a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager, who is supported by an experienced responsible individual. Both demonstrate a strong commitment to the home and to the children in their care.

However, the monitoring systems currently in place are ineffective and do not provide leaders and managers with sufficient oversight of the home's operations. As a result, shortfalls are not identified in a timely manner, limiting opportunities for the staff team to develop strategies and improve the quality of care and experiences for children. For example, the training matrix showed that several staff members were overdue for the renewal of core training, including safeguarding.

Leaders and managers have not taken sufficient action to address known risks to children by ensuring that staff receive relevant training to develop the necessary skills and knowledge. This limits staff's ability to meet children's individual needs and to protect them from harm. For instance, despite several incidents involving children being found in possession of weapons both inside and outside the home, staff have not been provided with training on this issue.

Feedback from professionals about the home is mixed. One child's social worker reported that communication with staff was 'clear and timely'. However, this has not been the experience of all professionals. For example, when one child was arrested for possession of a knife, staff did not inform the child's school, which instead learned of the incident directly from the child.

Staff have not received regular, practice-related supervision. This limits their ability to reflect on their day-to-day practice and to explore how best to support the children in their care. Where supervision has taken place, records of discussions are not consistently meaningful or legible.

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— 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; 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)(a)(c)(h)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that staff have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through training and regular supervision to promote the welfare of children. It also relates to ensuring that monitoring systems are effective in quickly identifying shortcomings.	30 June 2025

The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority; that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(e)(i)) This specifically relates to the registered manager ensuring that children moving into the home have a well-planned transition and effective induction. It also specifically relates to the registered manager challenging the placing authority when there has been no PA allocated to a child who is preparing to move into adult care.	30 June 2025
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or	30 June 2025

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete; full and satisfactory information in respect of the individual has been obtained in relation to the matters in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d) (7)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to the registered person undertaking verification checks with referees when an applicant has been dismissed from their previous employment which has involved working with vulnerable persons.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.	30 June 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)(b))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and	31 August 2025

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home challenges them to meet the child's needs. Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate if the child's needs are not being met. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

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 Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Mark Easie

Registered manager: Nigel Rowe

Inspector

Becky Rutter, Social Care Inspector

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