

2684680

Registered provider: HeadStart Residential Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to two children who may have learning disabilities and/or experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 14 August 2024.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 February 2026

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: 27 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/11/2024	Full	Good
20/09/2023	Full	Good
20/03/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff demonstrate clear improvements in practice since last year, which has strengthened the overall stability of the team and increased the pace of progress for children. Staff provided good support to a child who was experiencing significant challenges. Staff supported a positive transition to another home, which has resulted in consistency and stability for the child.

Staff have sustained a focused and reflective approach since, which has allowed the home to build on emerging strengths. They maintain routines and expectations consistently, which has supported children to settle well and develop their confidence. Staff provide high-quality feedback to parents and professionals, which ensures everyone remains well informed about the needs and progress of children.

Staff create lovely, personalised bedrooms that reflect each child's preferences, which helps children feel comfortable and secure in their own space. Staff design homely communal areas with familiar photographs, toys and activity resources, which promotes positive interaction and enhances each child's sense of belonging. Staff maintain these spaces with pride, which in turn reinforces children's pride in their home environment.

Staff manage each child's health needs effectively by following clear medication plans and maintaining accurate records, which ensures wellbeing is supported consistently. Staff remain attentive to all routine health tasks, which strengthens monitoring and prevents gaps in care. Staff also share updates promptly with external professionals, which supports coordinated health planning.

Staff respond sensitively to complex emotional challenges for children, which helps them feel understood during unsettled moments. Staff take time to explore competing emotional demands in order to reassure children and to build trust. Staff remain available through periods of heightened stress, which enables children to feel heard and emotionally contained.

Staff broaden each child's experiences through a varied activity programme, which increases confidence and expands interests. Staff work closely with school, this has resulted in sustained educational progress for both boys. Staff have supported one child, who was previously out of education exceptionally well, which has improved his engagement and increased his confidence and enjoyment of learning. Staff tailor daily routines around each child's interests and learning needs, which supports meaningful progress through personalised learning plans.

Staff track therapeutic engagement, incidents and progress consistently, which helps them identify trends and monitor each child's development over time. Staff recognise that the analysis lacks some depth. They aim to strengthen this reflection and support more targeted progress for children.

Staff understand the children well and build positive, caring relationships, which creates stability and a strong sense of belonging. A social worker described the home as offering a “really good service,” which reflects the measurable improvements in each child’s quality of life.

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

Staff use structured behaviour plans, therapeutically-informed strategies and consistent routines to reduce the frequency and intensity of outbursts. This helps children feel calmer, safer and more able to participate positively in home and school life. Staff maintain this approach consistently; this helps children feel secure and reduces the likelihood of serious incidents occurring.

Staff respond immediately when children raise concerns by alerting the manager without delay and initiating safeguarding procedures in line with statutory guidance. This ensures that children are listened to and protected. Staff document these concerns clearly, which strengthens oversight and transparency in safeguarding practice.

The registered manager manages allegations robustly by consulting the appropriate agencies, taking prompt action when necessary and completing timely, well-evidenced internal investigations. This approach strengthens safeguarding culture across the home.

Staff use restorative work, reflective practice and well-informed risk assessments to help children process their experiences safely. This work improves trust in adults and supports children to feel emotionally safe after difficult incidents.

Staff respond immediately when children are at risk of harm by activating multi-agency support, implementing safety plans and increasing monitoring. This ensures that children are protected and emotionally contained at points of crisis.

Leaders strengthen safeguarding practice through mandatory and bespoke training, close consultation with mental health services and prompt escalation to specialist teams. This ensures that children receive swift and appropriate therapeutic support during periods of increased vulnerability.

Staff use physical intervention only as an absolute last resort and apply holds that are brief, minimal and clearly justified. Staff complete detailed incident reports and spend time talking to children to help them learn from incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has responded decisively to staffing challenges by strengthening recruitment, increasing senior capacity and improving oversight systems, which stabilises the team and enhances consistency for children.

Leaders invest in staff development through targeted training, reflective supervision and the embedding of therapeutic support practice. This investment drives stronger therapeutic progress for children.

Leaders tailor both informal and formal training to the specific needs of children, which equips staff with the specialist knowledge required to meet complex needs safely and effectively. Leaders maintain robust oversight of training. They have introduced improved monitoring systems and allocate protected time for learning. This has supported staff to improve competence and reduced skill gaps.

Staff report feeling well supported from induction onwards through frequent supervision, practical guidance and accessible managers. This helps them build confidence and settle quickly into their roles. Staff say that the home has a positive and open culture where their views are valued. As a result, staff feel motivated and engaged.

Staff describe strong teamwork and mutual support, noting that they can rely on each other and on leaders during challenging periods. The registered manager uses structured appraisal and probation processes to set clear development goals for staff.

The registered manager uses team meetings, child-focused reviews and therapy-led discussions to deepen staff understanding of children's needs, which enhances consistency and improves the quality of care.

Leaders maintain the property to a high standard, which provides children with a safe, attractive and welcoming living environment. Leaders ensure repairs and improvements are completed promptly, which keeps the home well-presented and fit for purpose.

Leaders maintain strong oversight by auditing records, reviewing documentation before sign-off and carrying out regular observations, which ensures safe and consistent practice. Leaders also provide flexible and responsive management cover, which gives staff confidence and supports safe day-to-day decision-making.

Leaders make use of internal and external monitoring. However, some external reports lack the depth required to genuinely impact on service development and improvement.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, April 2015. p.55. paragraph 10.24)

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: 2684680

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: HeadStart Residential Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 30-34 North Street, Hailsham
BN27 1DW

Responsible individual: Scott Fasciolo-Barnes

Registered manager: Gael Barkworth

Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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