

2697062

Registered provider: Almond Care Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by an independent provider. It is registered to provide care for one child with social and emotional difficulties, physical or learning disabilities or mental health difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted on the 8 May 2024 and dual registered for a second children's home on the 16 April 2025.

No children have moved in or out of the home since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection, one child lived at the home.

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 November 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: 10 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2025	Full	Good
22/06/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child has been settled in the home for several years; the home is maintained to a good standard and is clean. The child's bedroom is spacious and personalised to their taste. Some areas of the home would benefit from a refresh of paint to ensure these remain warm and inviting spaces for the child to live.

There has been a recent focus on supporting the child to prepare for their independence in adulthood. Staff understand the aims of the care plan and encourage the child to develop their skills. As a result, the child is making personalised progress in managing their money, completing personal care tasks regularly and cooking for themselves.

Since the last inspection, the child has attended school-based education for the first time. While attendance has dipped more recently, there was a period of sustained attendance where the child was making steady academic progress and had begun to make meaningful friendships with their peers. The manager has liaised effectively with school staff to be creative to re-engage the child with the school environment.

The child is cared for by staff who know them well, many of whom have worked at the home for several years. Consequently, relationships with the staff are good and the child has begun to be open about their feelings. The child regularly engages in one-to-one discussions with staff. These both educate the child, advise on ways to keep themselves safe and appropriately challenge the child where required.

The child has been well supported to be honest about their identity. Staff have been accepting and sensitive towards the child and have supported the child to explore what this means for them on their own terms. The team have received bespoke training from an appropriate charity to support them in this element of the child's care.

The child has experienced periods of low mood and reduced engagement in daily activities more recently. The child is supported to explore their feelings alongside a child psychologist. The manager has not proactively reflected with this practitioner to inform care planning. There is, therefore, a missed opportunity to think creatively about how to work with the child, especially during periods of challenge.

The child's complex health needs are understood and managed well. Staff understand their responsibilities and ensure that required observations and tests are completed in a timely way. Clear documentation supports them in these tasks.

However, an appropriate safety plan was not put in place for the child following a recent health concern. This meant staff did not have clear guidance about how to escalate concerns should the child refuse medical treatment or observation. Information about the child's condition was incorrectly recorded in a one-to-one discussion. This prevented

the manager having the needed oversight to ensure that the child was receiving treatment in the timeliest way.

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

The child has not gone missing from the home and there have not been any incidents of self-harming during this period. This is a reducing pattern of behaviour. Staff understand the needs of the child well; they respond to the child in a playful way and ensure consistency of approach across team members. Despite encouragement, the child is not regularly engaging in activities in the community and, therefore, remains socially isolated.

The child's care plan and risk assessments are clear and contain a good level of nuanced information. They inform staff how best to work with the child and have a focus on connection and de-escalating incidents, when the child becomes upset.

The child understands how to make a complaint. Staff take the child's concerns seriously and the manager ensures that these are fully explored and responded to. The manager reassures the child that their feelings are valid, and staff work collaboratively with the child to look at how they can move forward positively.

There has been a robust response to medication administration errors, when these have occurred. An independent investigation, conducted by a nurse, recommended a change of medication, which has had a positive impact on the child's day-to-day routine.

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

The manager does not have a robust auditing and oversight process established. An audit completed was out of date and did not focus on areas of most importance for the child. Consequently, the manager cannot fully understand and evidence where the child is, or is not, making progress and what may be needed to address this moving forward.

The responsible individual does not complete auditing or monitoring of the care and management at the home. The manager has not received regular supervision from the responsible individual. This has meant that needed reflection and support of the manager has not been completed as required.

The home is largely staffed by qualified workers and there have not been regular changes to staffing at the home. However, two members of staff have not completed their qualification within required timescales. One member of staff and the manager also have several outstanding mandatory training sessions that have not been completed in a timely way.

The manager maintains good working relationships with involved professionals. Professionals spoken to said that the manager understands the needs of the child well and advocates effectively for them.

Recently, the manager has appropriately challenged the local authority about an aspect of care planning that has not been appropriately considered as part of the child's transition planning for independence. Although this is good, overall, this child's plan to prepare for adulthood has lacked momentum. This is because there is no secure plan in place for the child when they turn 18.

Staff feel well supported by the manager and stated that she models good practice for the team. Staff support systems are of good quality, and staff receive regular supervisions and team meetings. These are spaces where staff can have their voice heard and learn together. Staff are given the opportunity to chair team meetings, which is a development opportunity they relish.

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, 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 understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, the manager must ensure there are robust quality assurance and monitoring systems in place, including understanding the impact of involved professionals with the child. The manager must also ensure that all staff complete required training in a timely way.	11 December 2025
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	11 December 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; (Regulation (10)(1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)) In particular, that there are clear escalation plans should the child refuse needed medical treatment or appointments.	
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) This particularly refers to ensuring that all staff are completing the required qualification within timescales.	11 December 2025
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b))	11 December 2025

In particular the responsible individual must ensure they have clear auditing systems in place for thorough oversight of the home. The responsible individual must support the registered manager in reflection through regular and recorded supervisions.	
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Recommendations

- 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. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.4)

This recommendation was made at the last inspection and is restated.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2697062

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Almond Care Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Almond Care Ltd, 4 Barling Way, Nuneaton CV10 7RH

Responsible individual: Julia Senah

Registered manager: Jodie Spiel

Inspector

Louise Copping, Social Care Inspector

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