

2724344

Registered provider: Ash House Care LTD

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to 2 children with learning disabilities and complex needs. Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. The inspectors spent time with both of the children.

There is a suitably experienced and qualified registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 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: 14 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2025	Full	Good
13/02/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children continue to make steady progress, and they are settled in the home. Both children have lived in the home for over two years which supports a strong sense of belonging. One child said that they like their home. The children's social workers and family members also speak positively about the children's experiences.

Children benefit from warm and trusting relationships with staff, who provide attentive and nurturing care that reflects the home's therapeutic ethos. Staff speak about the children with genuine warmth, and the children naturally seek them out. Staff respond with care to the children's needs, showing that the children are at the heart of their practice. This helps children to feel secure.

The home is clean, spacious and thoughtfully arranged to meet the children's needs. Communal areas are bright and welcoming, and children's bedrooms reflect their individuality. This provides an environment in which children can grow and flourish. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated, helping them to develop confidence in their abilities. Staff support children to work towards clear and achievable goals, offering encouragement at each step. One child spends time in the swimming pool without using float aids and they are proud of their progress.

Children are supported to be as independent as possible. One child uses their electric wheelchair with great skill, and they move around the home confidently. Staff also provide gentle support where needed while promoting choice and independence in daily routines.

The manager has created thoughtful memory booklets that capture the children's journeys. These lovely keepsakes contain happy moments and meaningful experiences, giving children something special to enjoy now and to look back on as they grow. This supports the children's emotional wellbeing.

Education is promoted. Children attend school and are making academic progress. Staff encourage and praise children's efforts, helping them to feel positive about learning. One child recently enjoyed a day of work experience which was a new and positive experience for them.

Children are supported to learn about different cultures and religious celebrations, such as Ramadan, in a way that broadens their understanding of the world around them. The home's diverse staff team and inclusive culture further promote equality and diversity, helping children to feel valued and respected.

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

Children are safe in the home, and safeguarding concerns are rare. Parents and external professionals consistently report that the children are well cared for and feel safe. This reflects the strong, trusting relationships children enjoy with the staff who care for them.

Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children. They have a clear awareness of each child's individual risks and vulnerabilities including their complex health needs. The guidance available to staff supports them to take the right steps to keep children safe.

Individualised direct work gives children a safe space to explore their feelings and understand expectations around behaviour. Through nurturing support, they are gently helped to recognise the impact of their actions and take responsibility in ways that feel manageable. One child is beginning to regulate their emotions better, understand how their behaviour affects others, and make positive choices.

Overall, children receive their medication as prescribed. Since the last inspection, there has been one medication error. The child was unharmed, and there is clear evidence of learning following the incident, including reflective discussions with staff. However, children's medication is not always stored safely, and medication records are not consistently completed in line with the provider's expectations. Inconsistent medication practice has the potential to place children at risk of harm. The manager acknowledged these shortfalls and gave assurance that they will be addressed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The dedicated manager is proud of the children's progress and holds high aspirations for them. The manager is a strong advocate for the children and is confident in challenging other professionals when decisions are not made in the children's best interests. She feels well supported by the deputy manager and the responsible individual, who visits the home at least once a week. Together, they are a stable management team.

Positive relationships are maintained with parents and social workers, and feedback is consistently positive. When discussing leadership of the home, one child's social worker commented, 'Continue to do what they are doing, as they are brilliant', reflecting the confidence professionals have in the care provided to the children.

Monthly team meetings are well attended and provide valuable opportunities for staff to come together, reflect on practice, share learning, and receive important updates.

Staff who have worked at the home for more than 12 months have their performance and fitness to carry out their role appraised. However, these appraisals require strengthening because the views of the children and other professionals who have worked alongside the staff member are not currently considered. Including this wider

feedback will provide a more accurate picture of practice and ensure that the appraisals reflect the impact staff have on children's day-to-day lives.

Staff receive a range of training to help them care for children safely, with some training tailored to the children's specific health needs. Although restraint practice has not been used since the last inspection, not all staff have completed physical intervention training as set out in the home's statement of purpose. This means staff may not be fully prepared should physical intervention be required to keep a child safe.

Leaders have a good understanding of the home's strengths and continually seek opportunities to promote positive outcomes for the children. Monitoring systems are mostly effective. However, some shortfalls identified during this inspection have not been identified through existing systems. Strengthening monitoring systems will ensure that emerging issues are identified and addressed promptly before they affect children's experiences.

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; 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) (2)(a)(c)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff complete the physical intervention training specified within the home's statement of purpose. In addition, the registered person must ensure that monitoring systems are effective in identifying and addressing shortfalls in practice.	8 May 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's medicines are stored safely. Records of administration should be completed in line with the providers medication policy. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisals take into account where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 2724344

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ash House Care LTD

Registered provider address: Oakendale, Sandy Lane, Bishops Wood, Stafford ST19 9AF

Responsible individual: Amanda Brace

Registered manager: Michelle Brindley

Inspectors

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector
Emma Hutton, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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