

2774740

Registered provider: Bright Starts Childcare Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in July 2024 and is operated by a private organisation. It provides care for up to 2 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home.

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 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	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: 9 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/12/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, 2 children have moved into the home, and 2 children have moved out. At the time of this inspection, 2 children were living at the home. They participated in the inspection in ways they were comfortable with. The manager was present throughout the inspection.

The care plan for one child has recently changed, which has unsettled the child. The child has been living at the home for over a year and would like to continue living there. Managers have advocated for the child to be able to express their views.

Both children attend school. For one of the children, the travel distance to school is considerable. Their attendance has started to decrease. The school has advised that staff are doing all they can to help the child attend. Staff also ensure that on timetabled days off, the child completes the work that school sends home for them. Staff respond to children's learning with a parental approach.

Staff give children access to a range of activities. Children participate in seasonal leisure pursuits, such as ice skating. In the summer, one child went on holiday to the beach. Staff take photos of children participating in activities, including everyday life, such as painting the garden shed. This shows staff are keen to capture children's childhoods. Photos are curated into memory books. Staff take considerable time to present these in a thoughtful way.

Staff understand and celebrate children's identities. They listen to children's views and wishes and ensure that their preferences are met when possible.

One child has a health issue and is refusing to take their medication. On one occasion, this led to them being unwell. Staff responded appropriately, and relevant healthcare appointments have been scheduled. However, staff do not spend enough time with the child to learn why they refuse their medication and how they can help. The work required is not incorporated into care plans, and staff lack direction on this. This means that staff are not being proactive to ensure that the child is being helped to manage health concerns effectively, and staff do not identify this work themselves.

Care plans and risk assessments do not reflect neurodiversity. This means that staff are not being given information on how to best communicate with children with needs relating to neurodiversity.

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

Children are comfortable at the home, and incidents are minimal. There have been no recent physical interventions or missing-from-home episodes. When one child gets upset, they leave the home. Staff are always with the child to ensure their safety. This is

important, as the home is close to a busy road. One child moved into the home with a high risk of going missing. Since being at the home, such an incident has not happened. This demonstrates that the child's needs are being met more effectively.

Both children have recently self-harmed. Staff have provided first aid and continue to check on children's wellbeing. Staff have removed potentially harmful items. For one child, room searches took place for a week to further reduce the risk of self-harm.

Generally, allegations are responded to appropriately. Safeguarding partners are consulted, and investigations take place. There have been two staff dismissals because of inappropriate comments made to children. However, one allegation is unclear, and three versions of the same allegation are recorded. The manager has deemed this allegation to be unfounded, as there was a witness; however, the records do not clearly demonstrate which parts of the allegation the witness was present for. Safeguarding partners have also not been consulted. The record is disorganised, and managers have failed to identify this issue. This takes away from an otherwise rigorous approach to allegations.

One incident took place where one child physically assaulted another child and called them names. The details of this incident have not been transferred effectively into risk assessments. There has not been any meaningful follow-up with either of the children. The debrief with the child who was physically assaulted mentions the child keeping staff up all night. This does not recognise the emotional and physical harm that the child has experienced and instead seeks to elicit guilt. There was no follow-up at all with the other child. The manager has not identified these issues and processes to support both children with learning and reflection.

Following this incident, the children were taken ice skating together. This has been viewed by managers as repairing the relationship; however, there has been no restorative follow-up to support each child in taking accountability for their responses. This is particularly important for one child, who experiences difficulties with social relationships.

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

The registered manager left at the end of October 2025. The current manager has been working at the home since the beginning of October 2025. She is working towards her level 5 qualification. She is supported by an experienced responsible individual.

The manager's oversight needs to improve. When incidents occur, the manager has not identified emerging patterns or provided an effective follow-up with children. She has not identified where debriefs have not been child focused. Relevant information has not been transferred into risk assessments, meaning staff lack the necessary information to identify emerging risks.

Staff have been provided with training on neurodiversity and other topics relating to children's needs, such as specific health diagnoses. This means staff are equipped with

appropriate knowledge to prepare them for working with the children. Staff have also received training in trauma-informed practice. However, the manager is not yet ensuring that staff provide trauma-informed care.

Following situations when managers have felt that they cannot meet children's needs, exercises explore any lessons learned. These have been taken forward, such as ensuring that staff receive face-to-face safeguarding training.

Supervision sessions and team meetings take place regularly. These provide staff with opportunities to discuss children and their behaviours. Staff have been provided with wellbeing action plans. These give managers information on what staff feel they need to be able to work to the best of their abilities.

Staff feel happy working at the home and enjoy being there. Several staff took time to provide positive comments about the home. Feedback from professionals and families is very positive.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that there is effective oversight so that incidents of bullying are promptly identified and appropriately addressed. Additionally, ensure that meaningful child-focused debriefs take place with children. Identify when this does not happen and support staff in responding in a child-focused manner. Furthermore, ensure that records of allegations are clear and that managers identify the action they have taken.	1 March 2026
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.	1 March 2026

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;

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)(f)(h))

This specifically relates to ensuring that care plans include clear information about children's needs relating to neurodiversity, how it affects their interactions with the world around them, and how staff should communicate with them best.

Furthermore, this relates to ensuring that key-work sessions are clearly linked to incidents and the issues that children are facing. Key-work records should demonstrate what staff have said to the children and how children have responded.

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: 2774740

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bright Starts Childcare Group Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Sopwith Crescent, Wickford SS11 8YU

Responsible individual: Sanita Marshalleck

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Hannah Phillips, Social Care Inspector

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