

2801026

Registered provider: Athena Children's services limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and registered to provide care for one child with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager left in April 2025. A new manager has been appointed and has submitted their application to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the first full inspection since the home registered with Ofsted in January 2025. At the time of the inspection, there was one child living at the home. The child was spoken to during the inspection.

Since the home opened, two children have moved in and one child has moved on. When children move in, they receive a thoughtfully planned introduction to the home. One child moved on after a full assessment of their needs was completed by their social worker. This was in line with the child's wishes and in their best interests.

The child has positive experiences. They have established good relationships with staff and receive tailored support to meet their needs.

The child is registered with primary healthcare services and is encouraged to attend scheduled appointments. When concerns have been identified around the child's substance misuse, appropriate referrals to specialist teams have been made. Staff also provided several learning sessions to help the child understand their wider health needs and the risks linked to substance misuse. As a result, the risks in this area have now reduced.

Staff actively listen and respond to the child's views, ensuring that their voice is heard and considered in care planning and decision-making. Planned discussions are responsive and help the child to reflect on their feelings.

Staff organise a positive range of activities that reflect the child's interests and hobbies. These are planned collaboratively with the child and have included badminton sessions, trips to theme parks and a holiday at a coastal resort. The child has also played an active role in charitable work, including donating to food banks.

Staff support the child to undertake practical tasks to help build their independence skills. The child has enjoyed developing their skills in budgeting, cooking, cleaning and shopping.

The child is offered regular therapy sessions with a psychotherapist and is beginning to benefit from this resource.

Staff actively support the child to explore and express their individual identity in a safe space. Consequently, the child has been able to confidently express their preferences. Staff help the child to understand and appreciate differences in race, culture and sexuality through regular learning activities.

The child is enrolled in a school but is not currently attending. Leaders and managers are advocating for a more suitable education placement. The interim educational activities at

the home are inconsistent and the child's engagement is low. The records relating to this work are variable in quality. This fails to evidence how the staff supported the child and the benefits to the child.

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

Staff are trained in understanding effective safeguarding practice. They are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard the child. The staff have a good knowledge of procedures and the child's individual needs.

The child's risk management plan is detailed and regularly updated by leaders, managers and staff. There is clear guidance for staff to manage the risks for the child. Staff follow these strategies to reduce these risks.

Missing-from-home incidents have reduced for the child. When incidents do happen, staff are proactive in looking for the child and regularly try to get in touch with them. Staff understand and implement the agreed protocols well.

Staff follow behaviour management strategies successfully. Staff have a good awareness of potential triggers for the child's behaviour and combine this understanding with consistent de-escalation approaches to reduce difficult situations.

There are appropriate safeguarding procedures. Leaders and managers have referred one allegation of harm to the local authority designated officer. This concern was thoroughly investigated, with an unsubstantiated outcome. Leaders and managers ensured that the identified learning from this concern was addressed.

Safe recruitment processes for permanent staff are suitable. Leaders and managers ensure that the use of agency staff is minimal. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that the recruitment records for agency staff contain all the required information. This does not reduce the potential for unsuitable people to gain employment at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The previous registered manager left in April 2025. A new qualified manager was promptly appointed and has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager is supported by a service lead, deputy manager and the responsible individual. Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear commitment to delivering good-quality care and positive experiences for the child.

Leaders and managers have maintained good relationships with other professionals. These professionals provided positive feedback in relation to the personalised care provided to the child.

Staff speak positively about the support that they receive from leaders and managers. They value leaders and managers' approachability, knowledge and guidance. Staff meet

regularly as a team to review their practice and the needs of the child. Staff also receive regular and in-depth one-to-one supervision sessions to reflect on their professional development.

The manager has completed an internal quality of care review. However, the review does not include the analysis of consultations with the child, their family, staff or external professionals. This analysis could increase leaders and managers' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the support provided at the home.

On one occasion, a safeguarding concern was not notified to Ofsted, as required. As a result, Ofsted's ability to monitor safeguarding arrangements has been reduced on this occasion.

Leaders and managers ensure that suitable induction processes support new staff. Staff access a range of training to equip them to meet the child's individual needs. However, some staff are not trained in the use of physical interventions. This shortfall is particularly concerning given that staff are required to lone work with the child, which could increase risks if any interventions are needed during an emergency.

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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that all staff have completed behaviour management and physical intervention training.	3 October 2025
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	3 October 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are supported to regain their confidence in education and be engaged in consistent, structured activities. In particular, ensure that records relating to supporting children's positive routine and educational activities are consistently detailed and clear. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice that safeguards children and minimises potential risk to them. In particular, they should ensure that all schedule 2 checks for agency staff are assessed prior to their deployment to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that the internal quality of care review contains an analysis of the feedback gained from children, staff, professionals and parents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)

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: 2801026

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Athena Children's services limited

Registered provider address: 71 Spring Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 8LT

Responsible individual: Hayley Murphy

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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