

SC032838

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a private provider. It provides care for up to 8 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2014.

At the time of this inspection, 5 children were living in the home. The inspectors spoke to all children.

There is a school on the same site as the home. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this site.

Inspection dates: 12 May and 14 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of last inspection: 17 March 2026

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/03/2026	Full	Inadequate
20/08/2024	Full	Good
19/07/2023	Full	Good
08/11/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Poor safeguarding practice and ineffective leadership and management oversight of the home means that children have been placed at risk of harm.

Concerns have been raised in relation to a closed culture in the leadership and management team that compromises children's safety.

There have been some improvements which mean children have consistent routines and have more opportunities to have their views heard. However, sufficient improvements have not been made in a range of areas and most of the requirements raised at the last inspection have not been met and have been restated.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have not taken effective action to address procedures and practice relating to the safety and wellbeing of children. Continued shortfalls in leadership and in the help and protection of children have contributed to the inadequate judgement in the overall experiences of children living in the home.

Language used by staff in children's records and in daily conversations with them is not always in line with the ethos of the home or language that promotes a nurturing approach. This negatively affects children's emotional wellbeing and undermines the supportive environment that children need.

Despite the shortfalls identified on this inspection, children say that they are happy. They were observed to be relaxed and comfortable with staff. There have been improvements to the upkeep of children's bedrooms. Children personalise their rooms to their interests and with items that support their sensory needs.

Most children's health needs are monitored well by the team. Children are supported to attend medical appointments and access specialist support to promote their health. They access in-house therapy to support their emotional wellbeing. However, staff have not provided support and information to one child to help them to understand different stages of their development as they approach adolescence. In addition, the support the child requires from staff is not captured in their internal care or health plans.

Children's routines have improved because staff have taken the time to understand why some children struggle with these. Staff have implemented consistent strategies to ensure that children are able to sleep better at night. Children's attendance at school is consistently good. Education and residential staff work closely together to ensure that children get an appropriate daily routine that separates home from education.

Improvements have been made to gathering children's views and ensuring that their voices are heard. This is done through regular children's meetings and individual time that staff spend with children to hear what children have to say on different topics. Children also have positive relationships with staff so they can talk about how they are feeling.

Children are supported to develop their social skills and to have fun. They engage in regular activities and hobbies together and individually. Children attend local youth and sports clubs. They also participate in community events, such a recent local charity colour run.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that allegations are managed appropriately, in line with relevant policies and procedures. This means that concerns raised in relation to staff practice are not always taken seriously and, furthermore, children are not always effectively safeguarded.

Some professionals have shared concerns relating to a closed culture within the leadership team and a lack of transparency, when working with children to keep them safe. Consultancy experts have been invited into the home to improve practice. However, leaders and managers have not shown a willingness to learn or develop their safeguarding practice.

Children's support plans and risk assessments do not contain clear and accurate information, specifically relating to behaviour management strategies and responses to children who self-injure. Consequently, staff do not always know how to respond effectively to children's needs. This has led to several safeguarding incidents and a reliance on physical interventions to manage children's behaviour.

When children share that they have been involved in altercations with their peers, staff reassure the child, listen to them and validate their feelings. However, there is not always direct work carried out with all children involved to ensure that they understand how their behaviour impacts other children.

Safeguarding concerns for children during family time are not always reported and managed appropriately. Staff have failed to share concerns identified at family time visits with one child's placing authority. This does not effectively promote safe and positive contact for children with people who are important to them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have not ensured that risk management measures imposed on staff are consistently implemented and monitored. This has resulted in a senior member of staff undertaking safeguarding duties they were not authorised to carry out.

Leaders and managers have not adequately addressed some of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. These requirements have been restated. In addition, leaders and managers do not review incident reports effectively to understand shortfalls in staff practice and skills. As a result, the oversight of the home continues to be ineffective and sustained improvements to children's safety and care have not been made.

A new independent person has been identified to conduct visits to the home. However, they are yet to carry out a visit and provide a report of the findings. Therefore, inspectors are unable to assess if there have been improvements made to the quality of the reports, specifically seeking and including feedback from children, staff, families and professionals.

Leaders and managers have ensured that serious incidents and allegations in the home are reported to the relevant professionals, including Ofsted, children's social workers and the local authority designated officer (LADO). An incident and safeguarding monitoring system has been devised to help leaders and managers identify lessons learned to protect children from the risk of harm. However, this system is in its infancy, and time is required to embed this for it to be effective in practice.

Leaders and managers have taken steps to revisit safeguarding policies and reflect on some lessons learned with the staff team. This has been done through supervisions and team meetings. However, leaders and managers have not been fully transparent with staff about their individual roles and accountability in relation to the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. This deskills the staff team and fails to demonstrate how they are being supported to make necessary practice improvements.

There have been no changes to the staff team. It remains stable and provides continuity of care for children. Training is monitored to ensure that it is kept up to date and additional training has been sourced to develop staff skills to meet children's needs.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	5 July 2026

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii))	
*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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(g)(ii)(h))	5 July 2026
*The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—	5 July 2026

mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iv)(v)(xiii))	
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that the independent visitor speaks to children individually and with staff and parents as part of their visits.	5 July 2026
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; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	5 July 2026

that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; 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; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) Specifically, leaders and managers must ensure that direct work is carried out with children as needed to support their understanding of their own health and personal development and that the support required is captured in their internal care or health plans.	
---	--

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff 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)

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: SC032838

Provision sub-type: Residential children's home

Registered provider: Appletree Treatment Centre Limited

Registered provider address: Meathop Park, Meathop, Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria
LA11 6RF

Responsible individual: Rowan Knapton

Registered manager: Amanda Fishwick

Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector
Laura Roberts, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services and inspects services for children who are looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2026