

SC033840

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide short breaks for up to nine children with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2003. The responsible individual post has been vacant since September 2025.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 October 2025

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2025	Full	Good
20/03/2024	Full	Good
03/01/2023	Full	Good
11/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children say they trust the staff and have positive relationships with them. The children enter the home from school with smiles on their faces and give big hugs to the staff. The staff are familiar with the children's individual routines, remain attentive and communicate effectively with them. A child's social worker stated, 'I can see how safe and settled my child is when with the staff.'

Children are consulted regularly on those things that impact them the most. The staff ask children how they feel when they arrive using mood boards, verbal and non-verbal communication. Children complete questionnaires and attend meetings to share their views on food, activities and things they would like to change. Children see their wishes acted on and get to enjoy the activities and food they have chosen. This lets children feel listened to and in control of their stay.

Children make progress from their starting points. Children are taught to use cutlery, try fruits and vegetables and eat meals at the table with other children. The staff encourage children to learn new bathing skills, to brush their teeth and use the toilet independently. Children receive support to develop their communication skills and increase their vocabulary in line with their plans. This continued work supports children to become increasingly confident and independent.

The children have their physical and emotional health needs met. The staff support children to attend routine and specialist health appointments. Additional training is sourced to support the daily physiotherapy needs of children to maintain their strength and range of movement. The staff attend regular care team meetings and liaise with specialists, to enable staff to support children to understand and manage their life-long conditions.

The staff maintain effective relationships with the local authority and school to support the children's educational attainment. The staff support children to be ready for education and complete homework, and they praise children's engagement. One child's move to a new school has increased his attendance, overall engagement and enjoyment of lessons. Another child is making beyond expected progress in all subjects and is enjoying his learning.

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

The staff know the children and their plans and use this to support children's safety and well-being. Children's plans are regularly updated with information that is helpful for individual children, with pointers for staff to avoid situations or words that may cause children distress. This supports staff to ensure that children do not go missing and physical intervention is not needed to keep children safe from harm.

The staff speak with children to increase their understanding of emotions. Staff explore different strategies with children and reflect on current or previous issues. Children learn to reflect on why they are anxious or why they feel emotions and how to better manage these. As a result, children learn to be open with staff and address concerns as they arise.

The plans that staff use to keep children safe are effective. The actions that staff need to take in specific situations are clear for staff to follow. There are specific health risks, which are highlighted in the plans in bold and have clear instructions. Work is undertaken with children to raise awareness in emergencies and explain actions that staff may need to take. This reduces the anxieties for children and helps keep them safe.

The manager takes effective action in response to errors when administering medication to children. Senior staff recognise recording errors quickly and contact the appropriate health services to receive guidance and ensure children are safe. The manager reviews the incident quickly and takes immediate action to ensure that procedures are reviewed, additional training is provided and reflective practice takes place to learn from the incident.

The manager recognises the vulnerability of children and the impact of incorrect medication administration. The manager has additional competency observation and training aids to raise awareness and increase the competency of the staff team. This supports good administration practice and reduces the risk of incidents becoming more frequent.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have good oversight of the staff and the home. The manager uses a combination of audits and checks to keep abreast of the quality-of-care practice and recording in the home. Senior leaders use a 'score card' system to understand key information and inform the managers' own audits. These are in-depth and cover all aspects of the home and the children accessing the service. The manager completes regular reviews of the children to inform the children's plans and update the staff, who may not see the children for long periods due to the infrequency of their visits or rota changes.

The manager reviews incidents quickly to identify shortfalls in care practice. A child had injured themselves when feeling overwhelmed, causing a head injury. The staff took action to offer emotional and practical support to the child before cleaning the wound and monitoring the child overnight. The manager reviewed the incident the following day, identified the need to contact the NHS and took action to address it with the staff members responsible. In addition, the manager completed a reflective learning process with the staff team to discuss the concern and improve care practice.

Staff receive regular supervision that is reflective of their practice. The staff say they are supported by managers and find the process valuable. When staff have health issues,

they receive practical and emotional support from managers and staff, who staff say go above and beyond during difficult times. The children are discussed regularly in supervision to understand any changes or concerns and update care plans.

The handover of information between staff is communicated well. Shift-leading staff share information that is structured and provides clear actions for staff to complete. Staff understand their roles for the day, which children they are responsible for, and take part in reflecting on the previous day's events. The plans are reviewed, and staff are made aware of previous handover information to familiarise themselves with any changes. Staff end their meeting with 'let's have fun fun fun for the children'.

During the inspection, three children were accessing the short-breaks service. A further two children are living at the home with no current plan to leave. The manager has applied to Ofsted to vary the conditions of registration to provide care for those children. One child has been at the home for more than 17 consecutive days and another child for more than 75 days.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must provide a copy of the statement of purpose to HMCI and make a copy of it available upon request to— - a person who works at the home; - a child, or a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; - a parent of a child, or a parent of a child for whom accommodation in the home is being considered; - a child's placing authority; and in the case of a qualifying school, the Secretary of State. Nothing in paragraph (5) or regulation 46 (review of premises) requires or authorises the registered person to contravene or not comply with— - any other provision of these Regulations; or - any conditions in relation to the registration of the registered person under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000. (Regulation 16 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) (6)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must operate the home within the conditions of registration.	31 December 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that everyone working at the home understands their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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: SC033840

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Registered provider address: Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road,
Middlesbrough TS1 2RH

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Jacqueline Baxter

Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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