

SC034210

Registered provider: North Yorkshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides short breaks and longer-term placements for up to 9 children with sensory impairment, learning disabilities, autism and physical disabilities.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home, and inspectors spoke with them.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 2026

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	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

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
16/01/2024	Full	Good
06/12/2022	Full	Good
09/03/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff work proactively to identify children's goals and support their progress. Staff focus on improving children's quality of life by planning age- and ability-appropriate experiences to build independence and confidence. For example, staff introduce new flavours and encourage tasting different foods. This reduces reliance on gastrostomy feeding

Staff interact warmly and explain care in ways children understand. Children's specific communication methods are well understood and used. Staff seek children's permission before moving and handling and other support tasks. The care that staff deliver reflects children's plans and promotes dignity and choice.

Staff plan activities around children's interests and abilities. Staff make everyday routines engaging and meaningful. For example, staff use reading sacks with props and visual aids and activities to support health routines, including toothbrushing. Staff take children to activities in the community, supporting social development.

Staff support children to move on from the home thoughtfully. They take children to visit new homes and spend time with new staff. Staff help carers understand children's needs and routines that help children feel less anxious about leaving the home.

The decor in the children's bedrooms is not child-focused. Bedrooms appear clinical and rely on families bringing in children's personal items. The staff at the home provide a personal set of bedding for each child. In contrast, communal areas are welcoming and highly engaging for all children. The garden provides an interactive play area that children enjoy.

Children and families know how to make a complaint. The complaints policy is clear and accessible. For those children and families who have raised concerns, they have received an outcome. However, staff do not consistently put complaint learning into practice.

Staff do not have clear plans for as-and-when-required medicines. Records do not give staff guidance as to when to give these medicines. This has not harmed children but increases the risk of children receiving medication unnecessarily. Staff do not record controlled medicines in line with best practice guidance.

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

Staff talk with children in ways that meet their communication needs about episodes of distress. These discussions help staff understand reasons for children's behaviour. Staff use this understanding to plan appropriate support.

Staff aim to avoid physical intervention wherever possible and use the least restrictive holds when necessary. Behaviour support plans give clear guidance to staff, and families are involved in reviewing them. The registered manager has introduced reflective group discussions to help staff learn from physical intervention and reduce its use.

When serious incidents occur, the registered manager investigates fully. Managers implement actions to improve future practice. For example, staff now complete body maps both routinely and after physical intervention to ensure marks are recorded, monitored and explained clearly.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and act promptly when concerns arise. Managers investigate concerns thoroughly and inform relevant professionals. However, not all staff know who the designated safeguarding lead is.

Fire safety is managed effectively. Children have individual fire evacuation plans that meet their needs and are displayed in an accessible format. During a recent fire-related incident, staff acted promptly, and any insignificant fire practice is addressed.

Staff follow clear risk management plans. They understand when to escalate concerns, including health changes. Children are unlikely to go missing from home due to their needs. Clear protocols that reflect children's individual needs and risks offer guidance to staff should children go missing from home. Risk assessments cover monitoring systems used in the home. However, staff have not assessed the need for door alarms individually, which means monitoring is not always clearly justified for each child.

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

Managers and staff work hard to meet children's needs. However, several staff feel there is a disconnect between staff and management. Managers provide most feedback through emails and messages, which limits emotional support for staff. Staff support one another well and remain committed. However, they do not always feel recognised by management.

Staffing levels continue to challenge leaders. Families report that staffing pressures have affected planned care for their children. Staff work together to maintain care during shortages, but leaders rely heavily on agency staff to maintain safety. This reduces consistency for children. Leaders and managers recognise recruitment difficulties and have plans in place.

Some processes have improved since the last inspection. Audits identify concerns with medication and recording practice. However, shortfalls continue to reoccur despite being addressed. Actions from previous inspections and complaints remain incomplete.

Daily care records are not consistently child focused or reflective of children's plans. Managers have worked with staff to improve this, but practice has not improved.

Children may struggle to understand the care they received through reading their records in the future.

Managers have ensured that staff training in children's specific needs is reviewed. This includes autism and gastrostomy feeding. Staff are knowledgeable about how to care for children.

The registered manager receives strong support from the responsible individual. They provide regular supervision and practical guidance. Staff attend meetings that support reflection and development. Managers use scenarios to improve safeguarding responses.

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 make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1)) In particular, ensure that when children are prescribed as-and-when-required medications, there are individualised plans of care in place.	24 February 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. 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; 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)(c)(d)(h))	24 February 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children, in particular that children's bedrooms resemble homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the use of door alarms is rigorously assessed and under regular review to ensure that this is proportionate to risks to each child's welfare. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and 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: SC034210

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: North Yorkshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Racecourse Lane, Northallerton DL7 8AD

Responsible individual: Gemma Sheader

Registered manager: Katherine Clarke

Inspectors

Vikki Thwaites, 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 looked after children, 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 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