

Vinney Green Secure Unit

South Gloucestershire Council

Vinney Green Secure Unit, Emersons Green Lane, South Gloucestershire BS16 7AA

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty. The home can accommodate up to 24 children aged between 10 and 18 years. At the time of this inspection, 16 children were living at the home. All the children contributed to this inspection.

The home provides care for up to 20 children placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to 4 children under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. The admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services at this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in August 2025.

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 April 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good

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

Date of last inspection: 20 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/05/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/04/2023	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

In January 2026, the home amended its statement of purpose. It now looks after children placed by local authorities under the Children Act 1989 as well as children placed by the Youth Custody Service.

Leaders and managers are driving sustainable improvements across all areas of the service, with a focus on children's care, experiences and progress.

There has been a positive change in the culture of the home, and children now benefit from a more settled and safer environment.

The education provision has expanded, offering internal work experience and placements that support children to develop skills for their future training and employment.

There are positive improvements in the health provision across the home. A cohesive multi-disciplinary team of health practitioners work in partnership with care staff and the education team to support children's physical health, emotional health and general wellbeing.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are at the centre of all decisions. Their views and opinions are always considered and treated with respect. Staff use regular group meetings and direct work sessions to capture children's voices. Children said that they feel valued. This helps them to make good progress. Over time, they grow in confidence because of the positive relationships that staff build with them.

Children's individual identities and culture are recognised and supported. There is a whole-centre approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. Staff speak with awareness that acknowledges and appreciates children's individual identities. A dedicated staff member is working to further develop the area of equality, diversity and inclusion. Staff and children come together to gather ideas and coordinate events that celebrate diversity and create an inclusive environment. A chaplain and other external religious leaders spend meaningful and purposeful time with children to support their faith and curiosity. This enables them to build positive relationships and engage children in bespoke activities that reflect their interests and beliefs.

Children know how to make a complaint and these complaints are taken seriously and investigated. Staff take the time to talk to the child to understand what they need from the complaint. A follow up letter is provided and the child's views to the response are obtained. More often, children are happy with the response, and they are made aware of the next steps they can take if they are unhappy with the outcome. This supports children to feel listened to and gives them confidence that staff will take action.

Children receive consistent care, support, guidance and interventions provided by all of the staff working with them. Staff work diligently and build strong relationships with professionals and parents. Parents spoken to said that they are well supported, kept informed about their child's care and feel that their children are safe and well cared for. Parents and professionals consistently said that they 'cannot fault' the care provided. One parent said, 'They are caring to our son and really supportive to us.'

The children's environment is clean, well presented and well equipped. Children are involved in decisions about their home and have helped to decorate some rooms. They have done this to a very high standard. There is an array of children's artwork on display around their home, and most rooms and areas are personalised. However, personalisation and homely touches are lacking in lounges and the visitors' meeting room.

Children make positive childhood memories with the fun and varied social and leisure activities available to them. For example, they take part in the 'run challenge', card games, tennis, arts and crafts and many other activities. This helps children to build on their social and interpersonal skills, build appropriate relationships with their peers and grow in self-esteem and confidence.

Children's experiences are very positive and they make good progress in their education and their health improves. Through the good work that takes place to address the reasons children are placed in secure care, children are prepared for their next steps and have clear plans in place for when they move on. Staff work tirelessly to prepare children for when they leave. When children leave, they have a photograph album of their time at the home and a thoughtfully prepared farewell letter that includes all their achievements. In addition, a carefully prepared 'Filled with pride' box of mementos includes items that have a real meaning to them. This gives children positive and lasting childhood memories.

Children's education and learning: good

Children enjoy and value their education. Their attendance at lessons is very high. Children's behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They participate enthusiastically in discussions about topics such as the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence. They build positive relationships with their teachers and their peers, and respect the views and opinions of others.

Teachers use a range of assessments to accurately identify children's starting points, including for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use information about children's individual needs to plan support that enables them to participate fully in lessons and make good progress.

Children participate in planned careers weeks and value the input from visiting speakers, such as beauticians, employers from the construction sector and landscape gardeners, who discuss potential careers with them. Education leaders ensure that children,

including those who will be in custody in the longer term, benefit from effective advice and guidance to help them to consider future career pathways.

Children enjoy and benefit from a range of internal work experience opportunities to develop the skills they will need for future training and employment. Children submit formal applications and attend interviews for internal work placements, including painting and decorating bedrooms, refurbishing the 'inspire' and 'graduate' lounges and catering positions in the home's kitchen.

Children develop their knowledge and practise their skills across vocational training and in academic subjects, including GCSEs and A levels. Teachers plan and teach their subjects effectively. They use a range of teaching techniques. For example, in construction skills, teachers clearly explain and demonstrate radial circuits using pyramid and twisted wiring when installing electrical sockets, before children confidently and competently practise their wiring skills. Teachers skilfully question children to check and consolidate their knowledge, encouraging children to explain and extend their answers. They provide helpful verbal and written feedback to help children improve the quality of their work.

Teachers place a high priority on developing children's reading skills. They use a range of strategies to develop children's reading for purpose and pleasure. Children improve their English skills, which helps them to access the curriculums. Most children achieve qualifications across a range of academic and vocational subjects, such as barbering, food technology, construction skills, English and mathematics.

Children's health: good

Children receive timely initial health assessments when they arrive at the home and throughout their stay. These comprehensive assessments include children's mental, physical, sexual health and neurodevelopmental needs. They support the health team to identify children's individual health needs and carry out further assessment when needed. This means that children's health and wellbeing significantly improve because of the health assessments, health interventions and thoughtful care they receive.

A multi-disciplinary team of health and care practitioners work with children to provide well-thought-out and holistic support that helps children to manage their physical and mental health needs. They benefit from quick access to primary health services, mental health and occupational, speech and language therapy. The commissioning of a substance misuse worker and a social worker enhances this. The health team provide good support and training to all staff across the home. This supports child-centred, trauma-informed and reflective practice.

Collaborative working with all staff across the home is a strength. The effective and timely sharing of health information in regular meetings supports the ongoing review of each child's needs and risks. This enables high-quality, individualised care to be delivered in a compassionate, focused and therapeutic way. Health practitioners speak about

children with warmth and interact with them in a positive way. They work in a dynamic and consistent way to ensure that all staff understand children's needs and how best to work with them.

Children receive the medication they need in a timely and safe way. There are clear protocols to ensure that this happens. Health and care staff work collaboratively to ensure that the administration of medicines is as robust as possible. There are regular audits and learning from incidents. At the time of the previous inspection, there was not a robust plan of action to ensure the safety of medication if refrigeration temperatures went out of range. This has been resolved with a backup fridge and clear plan of action should the temperature of the fridge go out of range.

Children are consistently seen by a healthcare professional following a physical restraint or after any incident of self-harm. Healthcare staff also review CCTV of the restraint to support a thorough review of physical issues for the child. This ensures that staff can identify any additional needs that children may have. These interventions can also provide children with additional emotional support at times of distress.

Reflective practice is embedded for all staff. There are bespoke offers for staff groups, which are delivered by the health team in different ways. For example, they provide creative art and mindfulness sessions. This creates an additional layer of support for staff, which supports their relationships with the children they work with.

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

Children said that they feel safe, with one child saying, 'We are absolutely safe.' Staff work hard to understand children's past experiences and how these can influence their behaviours. They speak warmly about the children and maintain a positive and calm approach. All staff understand children's individual triggers and what strategies are most effective in supporting them during times of crisis. As a result, incidents are mostly de-escalated at an early stage. This approach has led to a reduction in incidents, and children live in a calm and relaxed environment.

There is a culture of reflection and learning from all incidents of restraint. The child's voice is always considered, and staff learn from the child about what works for them. Improvements in the management oversight of restraints have been effective in improving staff practice. This review process is well embedded and effective at identifying any shortfalls in practice, and learning needs are quickly addressed. If a child needs to be held, it is only done if the legal criteria is met. Good practice is shared with staff to consistently promote the importance of effective de-escalation strategies. This contributes to a reduction in the need to physically restrain children.

Restrictive measures, such as single separation (where a child is locked into an area alone due to significant risk) and managed away (where a child is separated from other children but with staff), are used appropriately, proportionately and only when necessary for the safety of the children and others. The management oversight is robust, with

regular checks to ensure that any period of separation ends promptly once the criteria for its use are no longer met.

The intervention team know the children well and support them to understand the factors that led them to be at the home. They work closely with children to help them understand their risks to their safety and the reasons why adults may be concerned for them. Intervention work with children addresses emerging risks, including those associated with their return to the community. Intervention workers work closely with external safeguarding agencies to ensure that the right package of support is in place. This helps to ensure that the children and others are as safe as possible when a child leaves the home.

Children are very well supported to develop positive social skills and behaviour. Staff help children to understand the impact of any unacceptable behaviour and to develop self-regulation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager speaks about the children with a strong sense of responsibility. He and the leadership team consistently advocate to ensure that children receive a very good standard of care and support. When there are difficulties or challenges, he ensures that these are addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

Leaders and managers have created a positive culture across the service and there is a relaxed and calm feel in the home. Staff speak and write about the children in a way that demonstrates respect, nurture and genuine care. There is a real understanding of children's past experiences and how these impact upon children's behaviours. Staff enjoy their work with the children and recognise and celebrate all children's achievements.

The registered manager has developed strong and effective quality assurance systems. These comprehensive monitoring tools take account of the care that children receive, including how their health and education needs are met. This helps leaders and managers across the home to identify areas for improvement. There is a robust culture of reflection and thoughtful adaptation, with revised practices introduced to better support children where shortfalls are identified. This approach helps all staff to develop in their responsibilities and reflect on their practice and provides them with clear guidance on the expectations of their role.

Staff receive good support through regular one-to-one meetings and team meetings. These are reflective and mean that they can learn lessons and adapt their practice when needed. Staff also benefit from specific subject 'toolbox talks', which are visually available and spoken about in handovers. These give staff opportunities to discuss the care they provide and also focus on their learning and development. Staff work well together and staff morale is positive. Because of this, the registered manager and other senior leaders are able to devise ambitious and creative plans to continually improve the outcomes for children.

Staff complete all mandatory training required. They also receive bespoke training, which is tailored to the needs of the individual children. For example, staff are completing reformatted trauma-informed practice sessions to support the admission of children who are subject to court-imposed welfare orders. This will help staff to better understand the needs of this cohort of children and help them to build safe and trusting relationships.

A stable and diverse staff team creates a strong foundation for good care for children. Staff spoke of their confidence in the registered manager and leadership team. Staff are supported to develop and grow. For example, some staff have progressed to taking on new roles or promotions. This solid foundation has created a strong and confident staff team who are consistent and positive about their work and committed to the children.

Partnership working with external agencies is exceptional. Professionals and families commended managers and staff on their communication, collaborative approach and the positive and nurturing care provided. A common thread in feedback from other professionals and children's families is the positive progress that children make because of the strong leadership in the home.

The average occupancy level has been at 86% in the last 12 months, with vacancies managed as part of the Youth Custody Services contingency planning and the home's recent transition to accepting welfare placements following contractual changes.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, for the children's home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of their children, it will, in most cases, provide a homely, domestic environment. In particular, they should personalise and make more homely the lounge and the family contact meeting rooms. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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'.

Secure children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035500

Provision sub-type: Secure unit

Registered provider address: South Gloucestershire Adults, Children's and Health, PO box 1955, Bristol BS37 0DE

Responsible individual: Catherine Boyce

Registered manager: Gary Willding

Inspectors

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