

Vinney Green Secure Unit

Registered provider: South Gloucestershire Council

Registered provider address: 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, 23 children were living at the home.

All places available at the home are commissioned on a contractual basis by the Youth Custody Service (YCS). The YCS may, under certain circumstances, permit local authority children's services to spot-purchase a vacant bed at the home, to enable a local authority to place a child on welfare grounds under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires 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 registered manager resigned in February 2025. The home has a new manager. The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 May 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
Children's education and learning	good
Children's health	good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The secure children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 16 July 2024

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
16/07/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
18/04/2023	Full	Good
02/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
20/04/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

While children are making progress and having positive experiences, the overall judgement is impacted by shortfalls in the help and protection of children and leadership and management. Inspectors met and spent time with all the children. There is a positive atmosphere in this home.

Targeted intervention work addresses with children the reason they are in custody and children engage positively in this work. This work, alongside formal reviews, plans and other documents, are not aligned and say different things. In summary, it is difficult for anyone to gain a clear understanding of children's objectives and progress and importantly for children to understand the progress they are making. Some language used in records is not child centred and at times, can be perceived as blaming. Managers have not identified these issues and staff are not aware of important information and changes in children's plans to assist them in the day-to-day care of children.

Planned moves from the home are managed well and are generally positive. Children who are due to return to the community are supported through mobility opportunities (authorised visits into the community) and preparation activities, including access to work experience within the home. For example, one child has contributed to painting and decorating areas of the setting. Another child is preparing for a move to the adult estate, has received a visit from staff from the new setting and is supported to think about his long-term plans. These measures are helping children to prepare effectively for their next steps.

'Voice of Vinney Green' meetings are held fortnightly and are well attended by children. Children engage confidently in these forums, openly sharing their views, ideas and concerns. They report feeling listened to and state that staff respond positively, taking action where possible. This contributes to children feeling valued and promotes a culture where their voice is central to the running of the home.

Children consistently describe their experience of living at Vinney Green as positive. They say that staff are supportive, approachable and genuinely care about their well-being. Inspectors observed warm and respectful interactions between staff and children. Staff maintain meaningful relationships with children, where appropriate, even after they have left the home, providing continued support through telephone calls and community visits. This sustained engagement reinforces children's sense of being valued and cared for. One child said, 'It is good here, it's better than you think it's going to be. The staff do care and they do help us.' They told inspectors they feel safe.

Parents report that staff are caring and responsive to their children's needs. Parents feel reassured that their children are safe, well cared for and making progress.

Children's education and learning: good

Children make good progress in their education and learning. They have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes vocational training options, academic subjects up to GCSE and A level and broader enrichment activities to develop personal skills. There is also appropriate support for children with limited reading ability. For example, children who enter the home unable to read develop their skills so that they can access the rest of the curriculum.

Teachers plan and teach curriculums well in most cases. This means that they meet children's specific needs and interests. Teachers mostly explain new topics well. They use assessment effectively to check learning and provide useful feedback. In a small number of cases, staff do not plan curriculums well. Children quickly start practical tasks without having fully understood what they need to do and why they are doing it.

Teachers develop positive relationships with children across the curriculum. They confidently support children and intervene sensitively when they need to help children modify their behaviour. This supports children to re-engage well in activities and means that lessons flow with few interruptions.

Most children, many of whom attended school poorly before they came to the home, attend their lessons at high rates. They value the educational opportunities that they have.

Children with special educational needs receive thorough support. Detailed information about children's needs is gathered and used to plan current support and further assessment. This support helps children to build positive relationships with education staff and engage well with their studies.

Children benefit from helpful encounters with employers to help them plan their future career paths. Those due to return to the community benefit from helpful careers guidance, such as about study opportunities close to their areas of release. Staff have not fully developed this support for children who will be in custody in the longer term.

Children's health: good

Children benefit from easy access to a skilled and experienced team of healthcare staff. The healthcare staff work creatively to quickly build positive relationships with children. They know the children well and focus on listening to children to improve their health outcomes. This approach helps children to feel comfortable when discussing their health needs. There are examples of children who had

received all routine immunisations following their arrival at the home and children who have accessed dental care for the first time.

Children are initially assessed with a Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool within three days of arriving at the home. This is added to by the health team during the first few days, including assessments for mental health, substance misuse, sexual health, physical health and needs relating to their neurodiversity. Ongoing reviews ensure that children's plans are updated, delivered and continue to meet their needs. This leads to consistent practice and work that supports children's progress.

Children receive timely health assessments that determine their immediate and longer-term health needs. They benefit from quick access to primary health services, including a GP, a dentist, an optician, immunisations and vaccinations. Staff share updates about children in the weekly health multi-disciplinary meetings and Summary of needs and risk meetings. These healthcare services are further supported by an advanced clinical practitioner who can prescribe medication and provide long-term condition clinics and advice and treatment. The children also benefit from sexual health and substance misuse advice and guidance.

Children are routinely seen by a health professional following a physical restraint or after any incident of self-harm. This helps staff to identify any additional needs that children may have and ensures that they are well supported during difficult times and that any immediate medical issues are attended to.

Children receive the medication they need when they need it to help them stay healthy and well. Staff competency in administration and recording is assessed to ensure practices are safe. Storage of medicines at the home is generally good. The process for action to be taken if the medication refrigerator goes out of the required temperature range needs to be strengthened.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children say that they have positive relationships with staff and that they feel safe. Any concerns about staff raised by children are taken seriously. Managers work with the local authority designated officer and children's social workers to explore any allegations in line with procedures. Actions are taken as appropriate.

When physical restraint is used, practice is appropriate and proportionate. Children's plans are not always updated with findings from the CCTV review of incidents. This means that, on some occasions, staff are not working consistently with the children as they are not aware of up-to-date information.

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 proportionately and appropriately. Records do not show that the legal criteria are met throughout incidents to justify the ongoing use of such measures.

The home's policy does not support staff practice in that it does not make definitions or expectations clear enough. Although there is no impact on the children, this lack of guidance for staff is causing them some confusion.

Effective safer recruitment processes are in place that assess staff's suitability to work with vulnerable children. Children are involved in the interview process for new recruits, and their scoring and views are part of the selection. The leadership team follows a clear, transparent and child-centred approach to recruitment.

Incident review meetings happen frequently with all meetings being attended by an independent safeguarding professional. Leaders and managers share any lessons learned with staff to support staff in improving their practice. During the inspection a review meeting took place that was observed by inspectors. The manager took decisive action to share the learning identified.

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

Since the last inspection, a new manager has been appointed, and he has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager has identified the actions that he intends to take to address some shortfalls he has recognised in his oversight of the home. As a result, there is a firm basis for improvements to the service to be made. However, as these have either not yet been implemented or are not embedded, the impact is not fully known. In one example, the manager has introduced a morning briefing for staff to ensure that there is a shared understanding about children's care and support needs. The manager is passionate about improving outcomes for children and inspectors observed positive interactions between children and staff.

Processes for the review of incidents are not sufficiently robust. The result is that when staff respond to incidents, not all learning is identified by managers and shared with staff to improve their practice. Management monitoring of children's care and support plans is not ensuring that records accurately reflect the day-to-day support that children receive. The monitoring of the healthcare service is effective and ensures that any identified shortfalls are quickly addressed.

The care and healthcare staff regularly refresh their mandatory training and benefit from supervision sessions and appraisals. This supports them to have the skills to meet children's needs. However, care staff supervision does not include reflective discussions about children's care, current risks and vulnerabilities. This is a missed opportunity for managers to ensure that all staff fully understand how to care for children and keep them safe.

Partnership work with external agencies is positive. During this inspection, professionals commended the manager and staff on the good communication and the positive quality of care provided. A common thread in the feedback provided by stakeholders is the positive communication, the progress children make and how children are supported with compassion.

The average occupancy level has been 89% in the past 12 months. The home has operated to capacity. The Youth Custody Service maintains some vacancies at all times across the secure children's homes it commissions with to ensure that there is contingency.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) Specially, ensure children's plans are updated with newly identified risk triggers to support the child to prevent physical intervention.	25 September 2025
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— (a) injury to any person (including the child); (b) serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or (c) a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Specifically, ensure that records describe throughout an incident how the legal criteria continue to be met so that ongoing use of any single separation or managing away is justified.	25 September 2025
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.	25 September 2025

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular, effectively monitor all children’s care plans to ensure that progress is captured and measured.	
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children’s records are up to date and provide a clear picture of the child’s journey. Also, records must be helpful and recorded using language that cares.	25 September 2025

Recommendations

- The home’s records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. Specifically, ensure there is a clarity in all records about children’s objectives and progress and importantly that children are helped to understand the progress they are making. Ensure that language used in children’s records is child centred not blaming. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2)

- The ethos of the home should support each child to learn. Specifically, children moving to the adult estate should benefit from appropriate careers information, advice and guidance. All staff should plan and teach curriculums well, so that children consistently develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- The registered person should ensure that they make suitable arrangements to store medication. Specifically, improve the process for action(s) to be taken if the refrigerator goes out of the required temperature range ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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: South Gloucestershire Council

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

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector
Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector
Saul Pope, His Majesty's Inspector (FES-Ofsted)
Sandra Smith, Health and Justice Inspector (CQC)

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 <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 2025