

SC067757

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

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 organisation. It provides care for up to 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2 children living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2024.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2026

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

requires improvement to be 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 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: 20 August 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/08/2025	Full	Good
02/09/2024	Full	Good
19/12/2023	Full	Good
09/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Summary of findings

The home experienced a period of stability after the last inspection. However, staff were unable to manage escalating challenging behaviours by children who subsequently moved into the home. One child experienced sustained bullying and felt unsafe and unsupported. The situation was only resolved after 2 children moved to other homes. Staff lack the necessary skills to manage peer conflict and bullying effectively. Leaders and managers have been reactive rather than proactive, failing to ensure that staff are suitably skilled to meet the children's needs. The children have not made meaningful progress and have not experienced consistent nurturing that supports them to mature and to develop important life skills.

Inspection judgements

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

Children's experiences have been compromised due to ineffective practice. Staff have not demonstrated sufficient skill or confidence in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours, resulting in conflict between the children. There is a clear lack of understanding of the complex relational dynamics between the children, and leaders and managers have not ensured that staff are able to take a proactive and consistent approach to managing them. This has limited the opportunities for children to feel safe, develop positive relationships and experience stable and supportive care.

Although staff consistently deliver targeted key-work sessions aimed at promoting healthy relationships and raising awareness of bullying, these interventions have not led to improvements in children's lived experiences. Staff rely on an organisational template intended to address children's emotional needs. However, when this approach did not prove effective, staff and managers did not demonstrate sufficient professional curiosity or reflective practice to recognise its lack of impact and adapt their approaches. There was limited evidence of alternative strategies being explored or implemented to better support children and bring about meaningful change.

One child had been at the home for 4 years and was making steady progress. However, the change in peer dynamics in the home caused their behaviour to deteriorate. This child was moved to another home to disrupt the bullying cycle. This decision reflects shortcomings in planning, training and risk assessment.

Children are supported to attend routine and specialist health appointments to promote and maintain their physical and emotional wellbeing. While there are plans to help one child to manage their dietary needs, staff are not consistently implementing clear boundaries and structured support to enable the child to manage their weight and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The 2 children living at the home are actively encouraged to attend school and are well supported in their educational development. One child is particularly excited about their upcoming school prom, and staff are providing dedicated support to help them prepare for this special occasion.

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

Children are not consistently protected from harm and safeguarding practice is not effective. Staff had difficulty managing the children's dynamics when all 4 children were at home. This led to serious incidents, including a child going missing from the home during the night. The child reported that they did not feel safe and were fearful for their life. Police involvement was required. This demonstrates weaknesses in supervision, risk management and staff response.

Safeguarding responses are inconsistent and predominantly reactive. Known risks, including bullying, child sexual exploitation and substance misuse are not always fully understood, assessed effectively or managed. Staff carry out key-work sessions with the children, however, these are not leading to meaningful or sustained improvements in children's behaviours or in risk reduction. There is much professional discussion and reflection with senior managers, but limited evidence of adapting staff practice when strategies are clearly ineffective.

Staff use therapeutic approaches, including structured techniques. However, these are not applied appropriately to address presenting risks, such as bullying. Staff do not consistently challenge children's harmful behaviours, including derogatory language and intimidation between children. This allows negative peer dynamics to persist and contributes to children feeling unsafe in the home.

Recording is inconsistent and records lack sufficient detail. This limits management oversight and prevents effective review of incidents. In some cases, the manager does not have a clear understanding of significant events due to poor-quality records and a lack of direct engagement with children. For example, following a serious bullying incident, the manager did not speak directly with the child involved, resulting in decisions being made without fully understanding the child's lived experience.

Children said that staff do not always listen to or act on their concerns, which further undermines their sense of safety. Allegations are responded to and investigated appropriately; however, decision-making does not consistently consider the ongoing impact on children. This does not promote confidence in safeguarding systems in the home.

Incidents when children go missing from home are not consistently reviewed in a way that identifies patterns, triggers or underlying causes. Opportunities to learn from incidents and implement targeted, preventative strategies are missed. Evidence indicates that missing episodes are linked to unresolved bullying and a lack of effective staff intervention. However, learning has not been identified from these incidents.

Risks associated with children's behaviours, including accessing inappropriate online content, potential contact with unknown adults and alcohol use are not robustly managed. There is a lack of understanding of children's day-to-day experiences. For example, the manager believed that controls around a child's mobile phone use were being followed; however, in practice, the child continues to access their phone without restriction. This highlights weaknesses in communication, monitoring and management scrutiny, undermining effective risk management.

Referrals are made to external services in relation to children's alcohol use. However, there is insufficient follow-up or alternative planning when children decline support. Staff responses lack persistence and creativity in engaging children to reduce risk.

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

Management oversight is not sufficiently robust. Records are often unclear. They lack detail and do not provide an accurate account of significant incidents.

There are notable discrepancies between staff accounts, recorded information and the manager's understanding of events. For example, serious incidents relating to bullying were not clearly documented and the manager lacked full knowledge of what had occurred. It was only following discussions during the inspection that the manager became aware of key details, including the impact on the child. This demonstrates a lack of professional curiosity and insufficient oversight.

While there is monitoring by senior managers, poor-quality incident recording is limiting senior managers' understanding of the extent of the safeguarding concerns in the home and their evaluation of practice that promotes positive outcomes for children.

Additionally, the manager has not consistently reviewed incidents to identify patterns, themes or learning. As a result, opportunities to improve the quality of care are missed. This is evident following unplanned moves for children, where there has been no clear reflection or learning to inform future matching or care planning. Matching processes are weak and do not fully consider the impact of existing group dynamics or known behaviours of children already living in the home.

Staff do not consistently receive effective guidance and support. They lack confidence in managing and challenging children's behaviours. This impacts on their ability to set appropriate boundaries and respond to risks. Consequently, inappropriate behaviours in the home are not consistently addressed.

Care planning is inconsistent and not up to date. The manager was not aware that key care plans were missing until they were requested during the inspection. This raises concerns about how staff are expected to understand and meet children's current needs and risks, and how care is aligned with local authority plans.

Staff have been placed in senior roles without relevant skills to manage complex situations, without sufficient support from the senior leadership team.

The manager benefits from regular visits to the home by an independent person. However, these visits are not used effectively to critically evaluate practice. There is limited scrutiny of what is working well and where improvements are required.

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 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 work as a team where appropriate; 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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and	20 July 2026

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)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, the registered manager must ensure that staff who have supported children during incidents consistently record evidence, with details of actions taken. They must ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording.	
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— help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	20 July 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	20 July 2026

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose;

manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and

plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority;

that each child's relevant plans are followed;

the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.
(Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(c)(i))

The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—

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—

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

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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; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met;	20 July 2026

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—

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.

(Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are proactive in managing a child's dietary needs and set clear boundaries that support the child to develop a healthy relationship with food.

Recommendations

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In particular, ensure that they report on whether children are safeguarded effectively and whether their wellbeing is promoted. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: SC067757

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Registered provider address: Coach House, White House Court, Hockliffe Street,
Leighton Buzzard LU7 1FD

Responsible individual: Claudette Rudman

Registered manager: Samantha Dutnall

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, Social Care Inspector

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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

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