

SC463639

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to 5 children with learning or physical disabilities.

Five children were living in the home at the time of inspection and 4 were spoken with during this inspection. Since the last inspection, one child has moved on and 3 children have moved into the home.

The registered manager left in February 2025. A new manager was appointed and applied to register with Ofsted but left in March 2026.

The registered provider has recently appointed a new responsible individual, and we are currently checking this person has the relevant capacity, experience and skills to carry out the role.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 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: 8 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/07/2025	Full	Good
23/09/2024	Full	Good
03/05/2023	Full	Good
15/08/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

The overall approach to behaviour management has not been effective. Staff do not consistently follow behaviour support plans or use therapeutic strategies as intended. Leaders have now recognised these shortfalls, and work is underway to strengthen practice and improve staff confidence and consistency. However, the impact of these weaknesses on children's experiences means that the home is judged as requires improvement to be good. Despite these shortfalls, children say they are happy living in the home and are supported to see the people who matter to them. In addition, children are making some progress from their starting points.

Inspection judgements

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

Children live in a warm, homely and welcoming environment. Their bedrooms are personalised, and children say that they feel happy living in the home. Since the last inspection, 3 children have moved into the home and this was well planned and sensitively managed. However, one young person moved on quickly when they turned 18 following a period of escalating incidents. Although the move happened at short notice, leaders acted promptly and worked hard to help the young person understand the reasons for the decision and to prepare them as much as possible.

Staff understand children's methods of communication and use communication aids to support children to express themselves. As a result, some children have made clear progress in recognising and interpreting emotions. This has helped them to identify when they need support and to seek this appropriately.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, such as horse-riding lessons, that support their interests and give them new experiences. Activities with friends are encouraged and help children to build positive relationships with each other. Staff capture children's experiences in personalised memory books. These thoughtfully created books give children meaningful opportunities to reflect on their achievements and treasured experiences.

Children are consistently supported to spend meaningful time with the people who matter most to them. Staff actively facilitate, encourage and advocate for these important relationships. These positive, nurturing experiences with their families strengthen children's sense of familial belonging and emotional wellbeing.

Children's education progress is varied and, for most, well supported. The majority of children attend school regularly and are making good progress from their starting points. One child has not accessed education since moving into the home. However, staff have a clear understanding of the barriers affecting this and are taking some proactive steps to secure the right educational setting. Staff strongly support learning in the home,

particularly in reading and writing, which reinforces and extends children's educational progress.

Children's health needs are well understood, and they attend regular health checks. As a result, children are generally in good health. However, annual medical reports have not been received or followed up by leaders and staff. This limits the staff's ability to fully understand any emerging health needs or recommended actions to strengthen support for children.

Children know how to make complaints. There are systems in place, such as a 'grumbles' book, to help them express their concerns. However, while complaints are taken seriously, they are not always fully explored, feedback is not consistently shared with children and they do not always receive a response to the concerns they raise. In addition, not all children have access to advocates, which would benefit children when they are making complaints. This limits opportunities for children to feel valued and listened to, and for staff to learn from concerns that children raise.

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

Staff mostly understand children's needs and associated risks. However, children's risk management plans do not always offer clear or sufficiently detailed guidance. For example, when one child turned 18 years old, their plan did not provide sufficient guidance about expectations or how risks should be managed within this new context. The lack of clarity limited staff's ability to respond consistently and safely, and contributed to an increase in incidents that emotionally affected other children. This also resulted in staff needing police support to help manage children's behaviours.

Allegations are generally managed well and concerns are taken seriously. All relevant professionals are informed in a timely manner, and investigations are undertaken to explore the concerns raised. However, children's views are not always gained as part of this process, and outcomes are not consistently shared with them. This limits children's understanding of what has happened and reduces their opportunity to feel heard and involved in decisions affecting them.

Incidents involving restraint have increased because staff do not use the therapeutic strategies detailed in children's plans during incidents. Leaders initially addressed these concerns but did not maintain effective oversight of staff's approach. As a result, poor behaviour management practice continued and went unnoticed. Children and staff are not always spoken to in a timely way when incidents happen, which limits the opportunities to gather their views. This has led to leaders failing to identify patterns of poor practice or take prompt action about concerns. The new management team has recently improved their oversight, identified areas to develop and put in place plans to strengthen practice.

Recruitment practice is robust. Leaders complete thorough checks on all staff before they begin work, ensuring that only suitable and appropriately vetted adults care for the children.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been inconsistent leadership due to changes of both the manager and the responsible individual. At the time of the inspection, the home was being managed by the deputy manager with support from a manager from another home within the organisation. A new responsible individual has recently been appointed, but Ofsted has not yet received the required information to be able to consider their suitability for this role.

Monitoring systems in the home are not always effective, and consistent procedures to review practice have been lacking. Leaders' reviews of the quality of care that children receive lack analysis and do not provide a clear overview of emerging themes, risks or the actions needed to ensure improvements. In addition, poor-quality records limit leaders' ability to understand patterns, respond to concerns and demonstrate how decisions are informed. This has led to opportunities to improve practice being missed.

The current managers have a developing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home. They are committed to improving practice and have started to complete regular training sessions with the staff team. The action plan they have put in place is regularly reviewed. However, as this is a new initiative, it is not yet clear if this will be effective.

Staff now receive training that is targeted to the specific needs of the children, ensuring staff are equipped to understand their fundamental needs. This includes training being delivered by external specialist agencies working towards staff having a more therapeutic approach. Staff have regular, purposeful supervision meetings with their managers and say they feel supported in their role. In addition, staff development plans have recently been put in place to enhance staff skills and improve the quality of care offered to children.

Feedback from parents and professionals is generally positive. However, all highlight that communication from staff and managers requires improvement, especially when incidents happen and about the outcomes of health appointments. Leaders accept this and have new plans in place to strengthen communication.

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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; ensure that each child— is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(b)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children are spoken with following incidents in a timely way, that their views are consistently sought when concerns relate to them, and that the outcomes of any complaints are shared with them promptly. Leaders must ensure that children also have access to advocates as needed.	10 May 2026
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.	10 May 2026

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; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(v)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff follow children's behaviour management plans consistently, understand their roles and responsibilities in reporting any concerns relating to children, and have clear guidance in place to help them respond to incidents safely to reduce risks. In addition, leaders must ensure that the processes to respond to and manage allegations are followed.	
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; 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—	10 May 2026

research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; 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)(f)(g)(i)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's care records in the home are regularly updated and children's review records are obtained in a timely way after reviews. In addition, the registered person must ensure that monitoring systems are used effectively to identify shortfalls in staff practice, training and children's risk assessments, and address these as needed.	
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2))	10 May 2026
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").	10 May 2026

The registered person must—

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

In particular, the registered person must complete a regular review of the quality of care provided to children and thoroughly analyse all required information to ensure that there is a suitable plan to improve care as needed.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child, particularly the recording of children's incidents. In addition, records should be stored appropriately and kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3 and 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: SC463639

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Aston Children's Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 147 Stamford Hill, London N16 5LG

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Joanne Humphreys, 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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