

# SC472381

Registered provider: Middlesbrough Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, the home was providing care for four children with complex needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2024.

### Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

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

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 16 April 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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 16/04/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 21/11/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 08/03/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 07/03/2022      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children experience care that reflects their ethnicity and culture and respects their individual identity. They access specialist hairdressers and use products that support their self-care routines. They cook family recipes, enjoy familiar foods and explore new cultures through shared experiences. These opportunities help children feel accepted, valued and connected to their heritage.

Children are supported to remain physically and emotionally healthy. They attend routine health appointments and specialist assessments, and they manage their medication and long-term conditions with confidence. Their health needs are met consistently, contributing to their overall well-being.

When children have raised concerns about staff, they have felt listened to and involved in resolving the issues. Children participate in discussions about their complaints and receive feedback following the outcomes. This process helps children to feel respected and reassured and that their views matter.

Children who are not in full-time education experience advocacy that supports their return to learning. They attend meetings and set incentives that promote their engagement. They benefit from home tutoring or new educational placements and sit exams. Over time, their participation in education improves, and they begin to re-engage with learning in meaningful ways.

Children are supported to prepare for their future and become increasingly independent. They are supported to explore employment opportunities, and plan for further education. They maintain personal relationships and take ownership of their meetings, choosing what information is shared with parents and carers. These experiences contribute to building children's confidence and self-determination.

Some aspects of the home environment need attention. Damaged furniture, marks on blinds and walls, and a lack of seating at the dining table detract from creating a homely atmosphere. These conditions limit children's experience of living in a space that feels welcoming, cared for and nurturing.

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

Some children are involved in offending and anti-social behaviour in the community. Staff have struggled to prevent children from visiting the areas that are known to the police for high levels of crime. As a result, some highly vulnerable children have been criminalised.

Children benefit from having family time with the people important to them. However, the lack of effective planning and coordination means the risks associated with one child's family time remain unresolved. Staff remain unclear about their supervisory responsibilities and actions to reduce and manage these risks.

One child's behaviour has significantly affected their sense of safety. This led to a marked change in the child's demeanour. The child chose to reduce their time in the community and instead remained in the home with staff for an extended period.

When children go missing, staff respond promptly and actively search the children's known locations, use vehicles to widen the search area, and contact children's friends and family for information. Staff report missing episodes to the police in line with protocols and children's individual plans. Children receive return home interviews from an independent person, which helps them feel valued and cared for.

Staff support children to understand and manage their emotions. They encourage strategies such as journaling and promote open conversations with children during difficult times. Children engage with counselling services and speak to staff about their feelings. As a result, incidents of self-harm have significantly reduced, and children report feeling happy and settled in the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders and managers have ensured that the home is appropriately staffed and resourced to meet children's needs. The manager has stabilised the team and has ended their reliance on temporary agency staff, promoting consistency in care delivery and improving team cohesion.

The manager has implemented effective monitoring systems to identify and address shortfalls in practice. Internal audits inform development plans for the home and guide staff training priorities. Senior staff complete audits in the manager's absence to maintain oversight. The manager responds promptly to audit findings and uses them to drive improvements.

Staff receive regular supervision that supports reflective practice and professional development. Supervision sessions include discussions about children's progress and adjustments to care plans. Annual appraisals and six-monthly reviews track staff performance and development. New staff receive targeted support to build their skills and confidence in their roles.

Leaders have prioritised staff training and development. The manager responds to emerging needs by arranging refresher training and inviting external professionals to deliver sessions on specific issues. Training is tailored to the evolving needs of children and the home's care model, ensuring staff remain equipped to deliver high-quality care.

The manager engages with external agencies to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. She attends multi-agency meetings and contributes to mapping children's social

networks and community activity. This collaborative approach enhances the team's understanding of external risks and informs safety planning.

Leaders and managers have not yet embedded systems to promote effective internal communication and accountability. Handover discussions between staff do not always address the key issues for children, leading to delays in agreed actions for children and causing frustration. In addition, communication with a parent about their child's health and well-being has not been sustained, highlighting a lack of consistent follow-through and responsiveness.

## 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         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and</p> <p>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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(b))</p> | 4 September 2025 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 4 September 2025 |

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

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;

de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(xi))

## Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a homely and nurturing environment that meets the needs of their children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).

## Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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:** SC472381

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider address:** Middlesbrough House, 50 Corporation Road,  
Middlesbrough TS1 2RH

**Responsible individual:** Myra O'Farrell

**Registered manager:** Nicola Whitby

## Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector



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