

# SC474150

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides therapeutic residential care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2018.

### Inspection dates: 24 and 25 June 2025

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

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | 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:** 26 June 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            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 26/06/2024      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 19/09/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 16/08/2022      | Full            | Good                            |
| 06/07/2021      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the management team has changed their approach to caring for, and supporting, children. They have effectively broken a cycle of bullying and peer conflict between children that had been apparent over several inspections. Three new children have recently moved into the home and have settled well. The changes have enabled staff to move on from the negative pattern that had emerged previously, and all the foundations are now in place for children to thrive.

Staff endeavour to provide positive admissions for children, even when moves happen at short notice. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, and each child benefits from individualised 'welcome packs' that help them to settle. Two children have moved on from the home recently. Although these endings were difficult, staff continued to support both children in a child-friendly manner. The management team has arranged a visit to one of these children following their placement ending after a substantial period. This will help to maintain important links for this child and reduce any feelings of rejection that they may have.

Following the three new children moving into the home, staff have a renewed sense of optimism about the impact they can have on children's lives. They are excited about the positive levels of participation that all three children have demonstrated since moving to the home. Staff actively listen to children and act on their wishes and feelings, including advocating on their behalf to their social worker or supporting them to work with familiar professionals.

Children are beginning to develop positive relationships with staff and confidently seek support and advice from staff. Staff are attentive and enthusiastic, welcoming the opportunity to mutually engage children in activities and make positive memories. In the past, despite good intentions, staff have sometimes struggled to be able to engage children in their preferred way.

Children are supported to engage in their education plans. One child's social worker stated, '[Name of child] has engaged with their education for the first time in over a year. The home took a very child-focused approach, allowing them to engage on their terms.' Since moving to the home, another child has been supported to remain at their school. This has been an important decision to maintain some familiarity for them and ensure that they continue to be supported by some familiar adults.

Staff are motivated to support children to develop their ability to manage their own physical, emotional and behavioural needs. Staff value children's participation in helping them to understand what works best for them. All children who have lived in the home have benefited from consistent support, and staff provide clear boundaries for children.

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. This ensures that effective action is taken to promote children's well-being when any concerns arise. All staff benefit from a wide range of training. With support from therapeutic professionals, the vast majority of the time staff implement well-informed strategies to help children and support them to develop their independence and self-autonomy.

Staff work well together to promote a safe environment for children and maintain a strong focus on children's safety. When things do not go to plan, staff and managers demonstrate flexibility and are frequently willing to adapt their approach in response to children's presenting needs. However, in one instance, the approach used to help a child reflect following difficult incidents was not effective. The child was not fully supported to understand how this approach may have helped them and their engagement in this support was limited. Despite minimal evidence to indicate that this support was having a meaningful impact, staff continued to adopt the same strategy.

When children go missing from the home, staff respond effectively and engage positively with other safeguarding agencies to ascertain children's whereabouts. Children benefit from consistent return interviews to help them consider why they decided to leave the home. In one example, the manager's professional curiosity enabled important information to be gathered, which provided essential information about decisions that the child had made and some immediate reassurance about their potential location.

Staff continually update their understanding of children's needs in response to changing or emerging information. This means that children's risk assessments are regularly updated and reflect known risks, while setting out clear actions for staff to follow to promote children's safety. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of child-centred language and children's records are increasingly being written to children, promoting a better sense of children's experiences of living in the home.

The management team uses an individualised assessment tool to help determine the presenting needs of children before they move into the home. Despite this, the significance of one child's neurodivergence and the length of time they had lived in their previous home were not fully explored, particularly how these two factors may have interacted with a positive move to the home. Consequently, staff were unable to safely manage this child's presenting emotional and behavioural needs, and a decision was made to move this child after a month of living in the home. Leaders and managers are committed to the further development of the assessment tool so that they can provide well-informed help and support to children.

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

The management team demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. Following child-centred care planning decisions, there was a brief period where no children lived at the home. Leaders and managers took full advantage of this time to enable reflection and practice development across the staff team. This has helped to reset a negative culture that had emerged in the home of persistent concerns about child-on-child conflict and bullying.

Despite these difficulties, which have been apparent over several consecutive inspections, staff have developed a strong sense of unison and there has been no long-term impact on staff morale. The support from managers and senior leaders has been instrumental in enabling staff to feel valued and appreciated. This was particularly important during one specific month, when staff struggled to meet the presenting needs of a child who had moved into the home.

Staff praise the support that they receive from the registered manager and the deputy manager. Both have demonstrated a strong commitment to guiding the staff team through challenges and acting as role models for good practice. Staff from the management team are frequently present at the home and they are popular with children.

Staff receive valuable support from the organisation's well-being manager. One staff member stated how significant this has been to their continued role in the home on a day-to-day basis. All staff receive regular supervision, and records demonstrate a clear focus on reflective and self-appraisal.

All staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme, which helps them to undertake their role effectively. Recently, the management team has undertaken more individualised training with the team to reflect on learning from placement breakdowns and feedback from the experiences of children and external professionals. Staff also make good use of regular team meetings to think about how they care for children. On a wider level, the management team has benefited from bespoke training from senior managers, which has been well received and incorporated a wide range of relevant topics.

The management team effectively utilises external monitoring systems to consider how children are helped and supported. However, in one regulatory visit, the independent person did not promptly share information with managers to enable them to take sufficient action following concerns raised by a child. This information did not emerge until the report was sent to the management team. This delayed any action from being taken, which should have been taken sooner. When this information was received, the management team responded appropriately.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Any use of specific conversations or targeted work with children should be arranged in such a way that the child is able to fully understand and benefit from the strategy or therapeutic framework being used. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the Quality Standards', page 39, paragraph 8.13)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The registered person should also be able to evidence how they have considered any measures that they feel are required to help children settle. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the Quality Standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. The registered person should ensure that there is a clear procedure for the independent person to share complaints, safeguarding concerns or any information that is determined to be serious, without delay. ('Guide to the Children's Home 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:** SC474150

**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:** Louise Munson

## Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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