

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/12/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1236832</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Benjamin UK Limited</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>32 Woodstock Grove, London W12 8LE</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Claudette Deysel</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Lisa Coburn</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Natalie Burton</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12/12/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

**1236832**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- The children are provided with a welcoming and homely atmosphere. The home is maintained and furnished to a high standard.
- The staff support the children with contact with their families and other significant people in their lives, in line with their care plans.
- The registered manager implements clear strategies that are effective to keep the children safe.
- The staff provide an environment where the children can express themselves and explore and develop their awareness of diversity and equality.
- The children are very positive about the care that they receive from the staff. All the children feel that the staff and the manager genuinely care about them and support them.
- The manager works positively with placing authorities, external professionals and professionals within the organisation. This enables the children to have a holistic care package in line with their individual plans.
- The children attend their individual educational packages and make good progress from their starting points.
- A dedicated, experienced and stable staff team cares for the children. The team is knowledgeable of the children's needs and can clearly identify the progress that the children make.
- The management has acted robustly following allegations against staff. The managers have provided support to both children and staff, to enable working relationships to continue.
- This inspection identified some shortfalls and areas for improvements. These are in relation to action to reduce the risk of some incidents recurring, staff workforce plans, memorabilia of the children's times at the home, records regarding independence and rewards and engagement in a range of activities. These matters are not currently having an impact on the safety and well-being of the children.

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

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, 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>9: The enjoyment and achievement standard In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard the registered person must ensure: (1) that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.</p>	31/01/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (1) enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare. This is with particular regard to ensuring that staff keep safe keys to the home and both work and personal mobile phones.</p>	13/01/2017

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- Ensure that the registered person has a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce requirements of Regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that staff keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them to record significant events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for four children, irrespective of gender, aged between 12 and 18 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2016	Full	Inadequate

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p><b>Good</b></p>
<p>The children benefit from living in a home that is welcoming, inviting and comfortable. They are cared for by a staff team that is stable, nurturing and dedicated to care for the children. One child describes the home as 'organised and fun', and spoke positively about all of the staff. The staff's knowledge of the children's needs is good, and the staff can identify progress that the children make. These include progress in reducing episodes of going missing, improvement in family relationships, children's commitment to their educational achievement, changes in their sleep patterns, enabling good school attendance and a reduction in significant incidents. Therefore, children develop self-esteem, confidence and begin to make positive plans for their futures.</p> <p>The children are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. The staff support them to attend their appointments. The staff are suitably trained in first aid and the administration of medication. There is a comprehensive system in place in relation to auditing and monitoring the medication arrangements in the home. This demonstrates that the children are administered their medication in line with their prescriptions. The children are encouraged and supported to eat healthily, and in line with their cultural preferences. The staff cook mainly fresh home-cooked food. On occasions, the children help the staff to prepare the main meal for everyone. Some children, who prior to their admission to the home smoked cigarettes and misused substances, still continue to do so. However, staff proactively engage with the children to make them aware of the potential risks to their health and actively discourage the behaviour. Further involvement has been requested from external agencies to support the staff to help the children to make informed lifestyle choices.</p> <p>Some children engage with the organisation's therapist to support them with their emotional and psychological needs. For other children, who are reluctant to engage, the therapist continues to visit weekly, spending time at the home to build relationships with them. The therapist works with the staff to help support the children's emotional and psychological needs. The organisation's therapist provides input into the individual children's therapeutic behaviour plans. This supports the staff to identify specific strategies for each child. In addition, the therapist attends the staff meetings and debriefs both the staff and the children where appropriate following incidents. This ensures that children's emotional and psychological needs begin to be met and incidents reduce.</p> <p>All the children are making good progress with their education attendance. Some children, who had minimal attendance prior to their admission, now consistently</p>	

engage and access their individual educational packages. Other children continue to attend their education full time. The children are passionate about achieving and receive additional support from staff and management to achieve their educational goals, such as additional tutoring.

The staff provide effective and clear structures for the children. They are successful at making these meaningful because they have a good understanding of the individual personalities and preferences. They understand and respect how the children's challenges and experiences have impacted on them. The staff promote a positive, proactive and respectful culture of care. As a result, children listen to the staff, begin to make more positive choices and have made positive progress in other areas of their lives.

The staff and management work hard to gain the children's views, using systems such as key work sessions and residents' meetings. These provide a formal forum to ensure that the children have their views heard. Where children have raised concerns, for example, with regard to feeling that staff treat other children more fairly, staff support them well, and help them to resolve their concerns.

Detailed care planning, risk management procedures and therapeutic behaviour management plans are in place. They provide clarity about how staff support children and reflect the positive staff practice. There is an effective assessment and review of plans and staff implement them well.

There is a strong identification with individuality, celebrating difference and promoting equality. Staff understand the individuality of the children, and this is usefully documented in their files. The children benefit from maintaining contact with their family and friends. The staff always ensure that this is in agreement with their placing authorities and their families. The staff transport the children and stay where required until their contact is over. Families are made welcome at the home, and some children can stay overnight with their friends.

The children take part in activities such as developing their social skills, going for meals with staff and each other, cinema, mindfulness colouring with the art therapist and bowling. However, there is a lack of consistent engagement in a variety of physical interests and skills to enhance the children's personal and social development.

Some children make progress in learning skills such as making appointments, cooking meals, self-care skills and laundry skills. For some children, they have become more confident in these areas, and where there was a previous over-reliance on staff for basic tasks, through staff support to build children's self-confidence, children are able to become more independent. However, there is a lack of clear record for children to demonstrate the skills that they are now capable of, and those where further support is required to ensure that they have the required skills to carry into adulthood.

The children live in a home that is decorated and maintained to an exceptionally high standard. The home is located near to public transport links and local community facilities. The children's rooms are beautifully personalised, and this continues throughout the home, providing an excellent standard of accommodation. The children respect this homely environment.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The children live in a home where the manager and staff effectively safeguard them. All the children spoken to report that they feel safe living at the home. The children do not identify bullying as a current concern. This is because when bullying has occurred, the staff and senior management have acted swiftly. This is through meetings with senior management, therapeutic key work sessions and completion of worksheets regarding what bullying is and the impact of bullying on others. The children now receive a clear message that bullying is not acceptable.</p> <p>The staff undertake safeguarding training. They demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and processes. Where children have made allegations against staff, the management implement the safeguarding policy robustly. They liaise with the local authority designated officer and complete comprehensive internal investigations. As a result, the children are effectively safeguarded.</p> <p>Some children go missing. When this occurs, the staff implement the home's missing from home policy. The staff are proactive in following children, searching for them and contacting them while they are missing. In addition, the senior management sends positive text messages to the children supporting them to make positive choices and reminds the children that the staff and, where appropriate, family care about them. This encourages the children to return home. On the children's return, they are welcomed back, and the staff spend time with them to gather more information to further safeguard them. Individual therapeutic key work sessions ensure that children are fully aware of all potential risks, and to identify alternative strategies to going missing. The staff also request independent return home interviews. This enables children to speak with someone that is not connected to the home. The staff working relationships with the police are cohesive. A police officer said, 'They are proactive, unusually so, they do contact, discuss and make clear their expectations.' This helps to locate the children and return them home as quickly as possible. Where the children are at risk of child sexual exploitation, the staff have a good working partnership with all professionals surrounding the child. The staff are proactive in seeking and sharing information.</p> <p>The staff spend quality time with the children. They consistently implement the home's token programme, which promotes positive behaviour through the use of</p>	



incentives and rewards. The staff recognise the children’s achievements and reward them through the diversion programme, which monitors areas such as children engagement, behaviour, respect for their home and independence skills. Through consistent messages from staff, clear boundaries and expectations, all of the children have progressed a level with regard to the diversions programme. The staff take the time to understand the background of each child. This makes the therapeutic behaviour plans meaningful, and how the children’s previous experiences impact upon and influence their current behaviours. This demonstrates that children are developing their emotional resilience, and improving their inappropriate behaviour. This is also reflected in a significant decrease in the level and length of incidents, with a reduced amount of physical interventions. However, additional rewards are not always as apparent in the home. Such as, where children have made a specific achievement in education. Although staff recognise this achievement, through going out for a refreshment, there is a lack of written recognition for the children to reflect on.

The staff effectively monitor the children’s risk-taking behaviours. Safeguarding strategies focus on good-quality risk assessments, with practical risk management strategies having a positive impact on individual behaviour. For some children, who prior to coming to the home were presenting with high-risk incidents of going missing, now have no incidents of going missing, have free time and can stay overnight with their friends, in agreement with their placing authorities.

The children are protected by sound recruitment processes that ensure staff are carefully selected and checked to prevent unsuitable people working in the home. The environment is physically safe. Fire safety training and regular checks to the fire systems ensure that due care is taken to ensure everyone is safe. The children are involved in fire drills and are aware of what to do in the case of a fire.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The registered manager has been in post since the registration, has over nine years’ experience and is currently completing their level 5 diploma in leadership and management. The registered manager has received support from management within the organisation to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection.</p> <p>Information about the home in the statement of purpose reflects the aims and objectives of the home and is supported by the children’s guide. All staff spoken to had a sufficient awareness of the ethos of the home. The management has built positive relationships with external agencies, and feedback from a social worker reported that they are ‘really pleased’ with the care provided, and feel that the home is ‘proactive in speaking to the education provision’, regarding arrangements for education.</p>	

The staffing levels are good. The staff speak positively regarding the support that they receive from the management from within the organisation. Significant changes have been made to ensure that the staff have clear guidance to provide the children with structure, boundaries and consistency. The staff say that these improvements and the opportunity for reflective practice have improved their confidence. The staff receive training. This includes mandatory training, and further specific training, such as diversion programme, cyber training and around solvent abuse. The staff attend regular team meetings that provide a forum for them to share best practice and develop strategies to meet the needs of the children. Some of the staff have completed their level 3 qualification, and others are enrolled to complete their qualification. However, while there is minimal impact on children, no staff have a workforce plan, for example, to detail their professional development.

Since the last inspection, a monitoring visit has occurred, and the registered manager has met the five requirements made at the last visit. The management has provided training for all the staff regarding the importance of ensuring that all relevant professionals and parents receive information in a timely manner. Individual children's records detail agreements made with placing authorities and parents regarding the information required and any timescales. Therefore, this ensures that all relevant people are kept informed of significant events. The children have made significant progress regarding developing their relationships with each other. The staff and therapists have spent good-quality time with the individual children, supporting them to reduce conflict with each other and develop new strategies. As a result, children's relationships and positive behaviour have improved. The manager has made improvements to the monitoring in the home, through weekly auditing of children's files, behaviour watch system and debriefs with the staff and the children. Where shortfalls are identified, these are quickly addressed to minimise any impact on the children and improve the quality of care. The management has updated the location risk assessment, and clearly sees this as a working document. As new information becomes available, that may impact on the children, the managers ensure that the staff are aware and action is taken to reduce the risk. This further safeguards children.

Internal and external monitoring systems are sufficient. They enable the manager to improve the quality of care and development of the home. The managers have a sufficient understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, not all shortfalls identified have been sufficiently actioned. This is because on occasion, staff leave the home keys and mobile phones in places where children can and do access them. The manager has failed to take sufficient action to reduce the risk of a recurrence which could potentially place children at risk or their confidentiality breached.

There is good management and clear reporting of significant incidents. The necessary professionals and agencies are promptly notified. The records demonstrate clear actions taken and the manager's reflective learning from an

event. Identified areas for improvement are addressed in a timely manner. This ensures that concerns about the children's safety are shared by the home to protect them.

The children's records, such as placement plans, are consistently updated, ensuring that all staff have the required information to meet the children's individual needs and ensure consistency in the staff practice. However, the staff do not actively keep memorabilia of significant events for the children during their time at the home.

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

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