

1236832

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation runs this home, which provides accommodation, education and therapeutic care for up to four children aged 12–18 who may have had traumatic experiences that have left them vulnerable. The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in November 2017.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 January 2019

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

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: 4 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2017	Full	Good
12/12/2016	Full	Good
05/09/2016	Full	Inadequate

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, 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 registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of any measure of control, they, or a person who is authorised by registered person to do so (‘the authorised person’)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i))</p>	08/03/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a))</p>	08/03/2019

Recommendations

- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- In particular, provide an incentive scheme that enables all children to progress.
- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The registered person should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. Reviews should be underpinned by the Quality Standards as described in regulations 5 to 14. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 64, paragraph 15.2)

In particular, include the feedback and opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress at this home. The manager and staff team provide a calm and nurturing environment that the children respond well to. The children said that they are happy and that they recognise that staff have the skills to support their individual needs. A child said, 'It's actually very good living here. Staff are nice. I get along with all of them. They have really helped me to improve my behaviour and they support me with my education.'

The children benefit from receiving in-house therapeutic sessions. Children who previously found it difficult to engage now participate in weekly sessions with the provider's therapist. Alongside this, staff undertake regular key-work sessions that cover a wide variety of topics. The sessions help the children to look at behaviours and anything that may be worrying them.

Staff have high aspirations for the children. They encourage and support the children with their individual education packages. All of the children have high attendance in education. They either attend school or college or the provider's onsite registered education provision. A child who was reluctant to engage prior to coming to the home is now looking forward to sitting her GCSEs. Her social worker said, 'She's making great progress. She has achieved stability, which staff have provided for her, and has ambitions now.'

The children have pathway plans to encourage them to develop life skills. The older children are learning to budget and cook. They plan the meals that they wish to make, purchase the food and cook with staff's help. All of the children are encouraged to undertake basic housekeeping skills by keeping their bedrooms tidy and helping to clear up after meals. This helps the children to develop a sense of ownership and take pride in their environment.

Staff encourage and support children to engage in a range of stimulating opportunities and activities. Children are encouraged to take up hobbies such as horse riding, boxing and swimming. A newly admitted child recently enjoyed a young drivers' course. Children have different experiences and make happy memories while living at the home.

Staff understand the importance of family relationships for both the children and their families. The staff provide transport and/or facilitate supervised contact in line with the children's care plans.

The home works closely with families and professionals to ensure that transitions are successful. The home has had two admissions since the last inspection. A social worker

said, 'It was an emergency admission that went very well. They were welcoming and very well prepared. This made the transition easier. [The child] really likes the placement and she is thriving.'

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

Children feel safe because of living at this home. Staff work hard to ensure that the safety and welfare of children are paramount. A child said, 'I do like it here. Loads of things to do and loads of staff to talk to. The manager is always there for me. I feel safe here. The staff look after me well.'

Each child has an individualised missing-from-home protocol for staff to follow. There have been four incidents of children going missing since the last inspection. The staff followed the protocol well, and all the children received an independent return interview. One of the children has a history of going missing. This child has had no incidents since admission to the home. Work undertaken and the stable environment enable the children to stabilise quickly. They begin to recognise unsafe behaviours and learn how to make safer choices.

Staff manage challenging behaviours well. Physical interventions are used infrequently and only as a last resort. When physical interventions are used, staff record the children's views about this. However, records do not evidence that staff are routinely debriefed following incidents. This has the potential to limit the capacity to improve practice in this area.

Children receive rewards for positive behaviour and sanctions for negative behaviour. Sanctions given are fair and proportionate, and the manager evaluates the records to ensure that each sanction is effective.

The home's incentive scheme helps children to improve their behaviour further. The scheme consists of three levels and the monetary reward rises as children work their way up the levels. This is a scheme that the children enjoy, and they take pride in achieving their points. However, while this scheme works very well for some children, it relies on each child having the necessary cognitive skills to advance through the levels. This does not ensure that all children have an opportunity to progress.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is passionate about providing high-quality care to children. She is inspiring and leads by example to ensure that the highest level of care is provided. The core staff team has remained consistent. Staff speak very highly of the manager. A staff member said, 'I feel very supported. She is brilliant. I can't sing her praises enough. A very good manager.'

Monthly staff meetings are structured and informative. The staff use this time to discuss

the progress that the children make and to monitor their own interactions. This ensures that the children continue to receive a consistent response.

The manager and staff communicate well with families and social workers. The manager and staff are strong advocates for the children, ensuring that children's views are heard. Any new information is shared promptly, and detailed weekly reports are provided. Professionals welcome the proactive approach to communication. A social worker said, 'Communication is fantastic with this home. I couldn't have asked for a better placement for [the child].'

The manager's monitoring of the children's progress and the care provided is consistently good. The manager oversees daily audits and undertakes weekly audits. She also undertakes detailed three-monthly reviews that evidence achievements made and the positive influence that the home is having on the children's lives.

The independent visitor provides detailed monthly reports. However, these reports do not regularly contain feedback from parents and professionals. This reduces the effectiveness of the information provided to the manager as a quality monitoring tool.

The manager has undertaken six-monthly reviews of the home. Throughout the year, the manager has obtained feedback from children and other interested parties. However, these opinions are not included in the report. It is therefore unclear how these views will be incorporated into the ongoing development of the home.

The manager has met the two requirements and the four recommendations set at the last inspection to good effect.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: 1236832

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Registered provider address: Church Farm House, Station Road, Aldbury, Tring HP23 5RS

Responsible individual: Claudette Deysel

Registered manager: Karen McNeil

Inspector

Lynne Drage, social care inspector

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