

# 1276421

Registered provider: Invested Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2022.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home. The inspector spoke to all four of the children.

### Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

**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:** 11 January 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2023	Full	Good
07/02/2022	Full	Good
14/10/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/04/2019	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children build trusting and respectful relationships with staff and say that they like living at the home. Children describe the home as 'amazing'. Children make progress in education, develop independence skills and have improved social skills because of the nurturing care that they receive. Professionals and family members echo this view.

A stable staff team provides children with consistent care. Staff adopt a therapeutic approach to respond to children's needs. This helps staff to approach some topics sensitively and with regard for past trauma that children may have experienced. The predictable care that children receive helps them to feel comfortable and able to ask for help. Additionally, this has helped children to gain an understanding about healthy relationships.

Staff encourage children to think about their future and career options. This helps to increase children's self-esteem and confidence that they can achieve. One child has recently been accepted into a public service career, which has been their aspiration for several years. Children's achievements are celebrated in the home, which gives them a sense of pride.

Children participate in a range of activities for enjoyment and learning. They learn to swim, which provides them with a valuable life skill. Staff welcome visits from external agencies, such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and fire brigade, to engage children in important safety conversations. Children learn directly from experts about risks and dangers in the community, which helps to keep them safe.

Children living in the home have shared hobbies and like spending time together. Staff also promote children's interests and support them to follow these rather than mirroring their peers. This includes going on holidays abroad. Children learn to respect the individuality of others.

Staff recognise that children need to spend time with people who are important to them. Staff are proactive and flexible to manage any risks linked with family time. This includes managing any logistical barriers, such as distance. Children's identity is promoted and helps them to maintain important relationships. Furthermore, this increases the likelihood that relationships will be meaningful in the future.

The communal areas of the home are large and inviting. Photos of children enjoying activities and achievements adorn the walls. This shows the children that adults are proud of their experiences and it also gives children a sense of ownership. There are some areas of the home that would benefit from more regular cleaning, such as bathrooms. These areas detract from an otherwise homely environment. Additionally, this undermines helping children to understand the importance of cleanliness and hygiene.

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

Children say they feel safe at the home and that they can speak to, and trust, all the staff working at the home. Children have individual risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed and updated. Staff know the children well and recognise and respond to risks promptly to prevent future harm.

Staff encourage children to lead a healthy lifestyle, which includes exercise and nutrition. Staff provide children with support to understand the risks around smoking and vaping. Staff persist in reminding children when they are reluctant to change vaping habits, and they provide information about smoking cessation. Children's knowledge about the associated risks increases and helps them to make an informed decision.

Children like to receive incentives, which promotes positive behaviour in the home. Natural consequences that are meaningful to the children are favoured. As a result, children rarely require any physical intervention in response to a behaviour. Children said they understand and agree with the house rules because they are fair. This promotes the positive relationships between the children and adults caring for them. Additionally, it helps children to understand the importance of compromise and boundaries.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When children do leave the home without agreement, staff swiftly identify where they are. A well-coordinated response means that staff quickly ensure the child's safety. Furthermore, staff understand the pull factors of children wishing to spend more time with people who are important to them. Children are welcomed back to the home with sensitivity and nurture.

Regular planned discussions take place which are relevant to children's individual needs and development. Staff use visual resources, such as videos, to help children to explore and understand their emotions. This helps children to make sense of how they feel, and they receive reassurance that staff will support them.

Staff rarely carry out bedroom searches. When this does occur, it is to ensure the child's or others' safety. However, on one occasion, a search of the child's bedroom was carried out the day after staff identified the possible risk and once the child had left the home. Additionally, recordings of bedroom searches do not identify whether children consent or not. This could be detrimental to relationships between children and adults who care for them.

Children are supported to understand what to do if there is a fire in the home. The registered manager consults with fire experts and follows advice. However, one child's bedroom is next to the kitchen/diner. The registered manager does not have a procedure in place that provides staff and children with alternative escape routes in the event that a fire breaks out in this area.

The children have bedroom door alarms to monitor when they enter or leave their bedroom. The registered manager does not regularly review whether this level of monitoring is necessary for each child. One child said that he does not like the sound of the alarms.

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

The registered manager worked at the home before becoming the registered manager. This helped to provide stability in the home. The registered manager makes sure that children feel cared for and have positive experiences.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision which helps them to reflect on their work and improves practice. The registered manager knows the strengths of staff members and supports those who face challenges. The registered manager and staff embrace the support of the clinician who helps to embed a therapeutic approach. Team meetings take place regularly where staff share ideas and solutions. Staff say that they feel supported by the team and the registered manager. This helps to create a calm and cohesive environment in the home. Children recognise this and one child described the home as 'relaxed'.

The registered manager follows safer recruitment procedures. Since the last inspection, changes have been made to the application process to ensure that checks are thorough. This helps to ensure that adults caring for the children are appropriate and safe.

The registered manager uses various monitoring tools to review the children's care and ensure that statutory documents are obtained. However, when important documents are not received, the registered manager does not always follow the escalation policy with the placing authority. This means that the registered manager cannot be assured that staff are following the child's most up-to-date care plan.

An independent visitor visits the home on a monthly basis. However, the views of the children's parents and relatives are not always obtained. This limits the opportunities for the registered manager to get feedback and to make changes to improve the quality of care that children receive.

The registered manager values the experience that staff bring from other roles. While there are a variety of skilled staff to meet children's needs, there has been challenges finding external assessors for staff's training. This means that some members of staff have not attained the qualification required for them to care for children within the statutory time frame.

## What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that the use of door alarms is reviewed and considered against children’s individual needs</p>	<p>31 January 2024</p>

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when bedroom searches are carried out, records include an explanation as to why they were carried out and whether consent was obtained. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that when actively seeking independent scrutiny of the home, consultation from parents and relatives is included to ensure continuous improvement. In particular, the registered person should assist the independent visitor to obtain parents’ and relatives’ feedback as part of regulation 44 arrangements. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should ensure that where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child’s needs during their time in the home, they challenge them to meet the child’s

needs. This specifically relates to children's statutory documents that inform the child's plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

- The registered person should ensure that all areas of the home, including children's bathrooms, are clean and regularly maintained to provide a homely and nurturing environment. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff members have attained a relevant qualification within the time frame specified in the regulation. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)
- The registered person should maintain accurate procedures. In particular, the registered person should ensure that a fire risk assessment relates specifically to the layout of home. The registered person should ensure that staff and children understand alternative escape routes in the event of a fire. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

## **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:** 1276421

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

**Registered provider:** Invested Childcare Limited

**Registered provider address:** Acklam Hall, Hall Gardens, Middlesbrough TS5 7BJ

**Responsible individual:** Michael Bowe

**Registered manager:** Mark McNally

## **Inspector**

Cat Makel, Social Care Inspector

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