

1236832

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home offers therapeutic support, education and care for up to four children who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma that has left them vulnerable. Education is offered at a linked provision on a different site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this site.

There has been no registered manager since July 2023. A permanent manager was appointed in August 2023. They applied to register with Ofsted within the required time frame. However, due to exceptional circumstances, the application was delayed. It is in progress.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

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: 26 April 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good
24/09/2019	Full	Good
21/01/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home. Since the last inspection, seven children have moved into the home, and six children have moved on from the home. When possible, moves are well planned. On one occasion, such planning was not possible for safety reasons. The moves have been managed sensitively so that children can have closure and positive endings. Four children moved back to live with their families. One child moved to a semi-independent provision, and one child moved to one of the provider's sister homes to enable them to live with their sibling.

Both children have education at the home that is delivered by tutors. They are working towards their GCSE exams. Staff understand the challenges that children face when they have had long periods out of education. A teacher said that staff pull out all the stops and find creative ways to encourage children to learn because they hold education in high regard. Staff support children in preparing to return to education, and they support children with complex needs to access alternative provision.

Staff have regular one-to-one and group discussions with children about important topics. Children talk openly with staff about topics that include identity, health and consent. Children have achieved qualifications in various important topics. Children feel at ease talking to staff and are helped to understand themselves, how to keep themselves safe and the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Children are encouraged to spend time with their families and friends. The manager and staff communicate well with children's parents. One parent said, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the care my child receives. He has made so much progress.' Parents feel reassured that children receive good care. Children see the people who are important to them.

Children take part in fun and enriching activities such as horse-riding, boxing and go-karting. Children have regular opportunities to request different activities, which the staff facilitate. One child has competed at a local riding school and won various rosettes. He is due to attend an Easter horse camp. The child enjoys regularly volunteering at the stables with his friends. Children are helped to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

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

The manager and staff have taken appropriate action to help keep children safe. Despite every effort being made to keep children safe, situations out of the staff's control have meant that, at times, children have been exposed to risky situations. A social worker and parent said that they are impressed with how well safeguarding

incidents are managed. One parent said, 'My child was so vulnerable and unsafe before they moved to the home. I would not want them living anywhere else.' The staff are confident and well equipped to manage safeguarding incidents.

There have been a high number of missing-from-home episodes. The manager has individual missing-from-home protocols for children and works closely with external professionals, including social workers and the police. One child who was going missing from home frequently and was at significant risk of harm had not had such an incident for over six months at the time of inspection. The staff manage incidents well, which has resulted in a notable decrease in frequency.

A child who had been exposed to criminal activity before moving to the home has been helped by staff to engage with the youth offending team. The child is being helped to understand the impact of offending behaviour on them and others.

There have been two physical interventions since the last inspection. These were appropriate and proportionate. The manager monitors and reviews the records of every physical intervention. This close monitoring means that the manager has good oversight and that physical interventions are rarely used.

There have been two allegations against staff since the last inspection. These were well managed, and the manager has worked with external professionals in investigating these concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There has been no registered manager in post since July 2023. However, a manager with appropriate experience was quickly appointed, and he has been supported by the deputy manager and head of care. He is working towards a relevant level 5 qualification. The manager's application was initially submitted within the agreed time frame. The application process was delayed due to administration procedures out of his control. The application has now been received. The action that leaders have taken to provide daily oversight of the home has meant that the absence of a registered manager has not had a negative impact on the children's progress.

Staff say that they have regular and effective supervision. Staff feedback and ideas are listened to. A staff member said, 'The culture is really positive. The manager has new ideas and has improved our practice, and we now work with a therapeutic approach.' Staff feel valued, supported and respected by managers.

The manager holds monthly child-focused meetings that are attended by staff, therapists and teachers. Children are encouraged to attend. Children's progress is monitored well, and clear actions are set to help ensure that staff meet children's needs.

A social worker said that they are very happy with the care provided to their child. They said that the staff understand the child's needs. The social worker said that the communication is good and that the manager works well with them.

The manager is a good advocate for children. He recognised that a child was not having enough time with his family and that it was affecting the child's well-being. As a result of the manager's intervention, the child's time with their family has now been increased.

The manager has investigated some staff practice concerns. When staff have not delivered the standard of care expected, he has taken effective and appropriate action.

Staff access a wide range of training that includes therapeutic training. The manager holds a relevant level 3 diploma. However, none of the other full-time staff currently hold a relevant level 3 qualification. The provider is supporting staff to gain this necessary qualification.

The manager's monitoring of the home is generally good. The head of care and the manager undertake separate monthly audits. The manager writes a six-monthly report to review the home and make continuous improvements. However, he has not included feedback from children, their parents or external professionals. The report lacks evaluation and the action plan is minimal. Consequently, opportunities are missed to make further improvements.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential;</p> <p>and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff have an appropriate level 3 diploma.</p>	<p>7 March 2025</p>
<p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).</p>	<p>7 October 2024</p>

<p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (5))</p>	
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<p>This requirement was raised at the last full inspection and is restated.</p>	
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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: 1236832

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Limited

Registered provider address: Coach House, White House Court, Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1FD

Responsible individual: Claudette Rudman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Amy Miles, Social Care Inspector

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