

# Kyloe House

Registered provider: Northumberland County Council

Registered provider address: Netherton Park Children's Home, Stannington, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 6DE

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty.

The home provides for up to 15 children aged between 10 and 17 years accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities.

The admission of any child under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who is under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

There were 9 children living at the home at the time of the inspection. All the children contributed to the inspection.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 30 January 2012.

### Inspection dates: 25 to 27 November 2025

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
Children's education and learning	requires improvement to be good
Children's health	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good

The secure children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 24 September 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
24/09/2024	Full	Good
28/11/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2022	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy living at this home. Staff give the utmost priority to putting children at the centre of all that they do. Staff focus on building strong, meaningful relationships with children. Consequently, children feel able to engage well with daily routines and the direct work carried out with them. This ensures that each child's individual needs are met and that they continue to make progress.

Children greatly benefit from the array of leisure activities. These extend their positive childhood experiences, build their self-esteem, add to their interests and create lasting, positive memories. These include use of the gym and climbing wall and playing electronic games. They take part in celebrations, such as 'Britain's got talent', World Book Day and planning for the forthcoming Christmas festival.

The opinions of children about their care are listened to and taken seriously, and this informs planning. Any concerns raised by children are swiftly investigated, and suitable action is taken when shortfalls are found. This supports children to know that their rights are promoted and that they are treated with respect.

When the time arrives for children to leave the home, proactive and good forward planning assists children to be prepared for their move. This is achieved by the children having planned activities out in the community and spending time in the place they will move on to. Staff work sensitively with the children to prepare a transition plan that clearly sets out their views and specific care needs for their future care. The children's time at the home is celebrated, with farewell gifts and a memory book. This helps children to feel less anxious, safer and more confidently prepared for the future.

Each child has an individual care plan that is revised at least monthly and as required. This ensures that all staff know how to care for them. All staff implement these plans, and this provides the children with consistently delivered care. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

Children benefit from regular contact with family members and professionals. This helps children to maintain crucial connections and relationships with those who are important to them. All children have visits from family members. However, arrangements have not been agreed and arranged with a local authority for one child to have telephone contact with a parent. The manager is taking action.

### **Children's education and learning: requires improvement to be good**

Children make some progress in their learning. Leaders do not have sufficiently robust or systematic approaches to quality assurance and improvement. Long-term staffing shortages have had a significant impact on the consistency of curriculum delivery and the overall quality of teaching. Managers are taking actions to mitigate these issues.

However, these are at an early stage and their effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated. As a result, leaders have not been able to secure the necessary consistency or raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision.

Teachers use information from assessments, including English and mathematics, and education, health and care plans to identify what children know and can do when they arrive at the home. They use this to plan a personalised curriculum that reflects each child's needs, including any specialist support needs. However, teachers do not use this information consistently or effectively to plan teaching and learning. This does not support children to make the sustained progress of which they are capable over time.

A core curriculum is provided, but it lacks sufficient breadth and ambition. Most children work towards qualifications in English, mathematics and science, yet opportunities for wider learning are limited. Personal development and vocational learning, including employability and digital skills, are not consistently planned or aligned to children's assessed needs, interests or future goals. Leaders plan to broaden the curriculum, including introducing construction, but the current offer provides too little variety or progression. Teachers also deliver ad hoc short courses, such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme, in response to children's identified needs. Children are not developing the full breadth of skills required for their next steps.

Teaching takes place in well-resourced academic and vocational environments that support children to develop practical skills. In catering, children benefit from opportunities to prepare and cook a range of meals, recording their work in personalised cookbooks that help consolidate their learning. In design and technology, children produce a variety of items, such as memory boxes and small tables, using appropriate tools to create mitre joints and etch their own designs. These well-equipped spaces enable children to develop confidence, work with increasing independence, follow instructions accurately and apply mathematical skills in meaningful, practical contexts.

Most children have very high attendance in education. However, teachers and support staff are not consistent in how they manage inappropriate language and behaviour, which limits children's understanding of when their behaviour is unacceptable. This does not help children to consistently modify their behaviour over time or develop greater tolerance towards others.

### **Children's health: good**

Children benefit from a timely, comprehensive and holistic assessment of their needs using the comprehensive health assessment tool. This enables the health team to determine children's immediate and long-term health needs.

Children have access to a wide range of services, including the dentist, optician and immunisations, to ensure that their health needs are assessed and met. Members of the

health team also provide personal, social and health education lessons with teaching staff in an effort to promote healthy living.

Children's health and wellbeing benefit from a carefully planned trauma-informed formulation led by psychology within six weeks of their arrival at the home. This provides all staff with an understanding of each child's life events and their current mental health strategies and goals, as well as informing care planning.

Health professionals review incidents and see children when they have been physically restrained, where there have been incidents of single separation (when they have been locked into their rooms or other areas alone due to risk to self or others) or when they are managed away from other children. Care staff ensure children's day-to-day health needs are met. Health staff are not on site after 5pm and at weekends but are informed each morning and on Mondays about any incidents so that they can follow these up. This ensures children are supported appropriately.

The administration and management of medication are carried out in accordance with policy, meaning that children get the medication they need, when they need it, to help keep them healthy and well. One discrepancy was dealt with appropriately, and when this occurred residential staff were required to repeat competency training before being allowed to administer medication again. Lessons learned are shared with all staff. This means that children benefit from staff who have a full and safe understanding of national guidance.

The healthcare team members are actively involved in bespoke training for new and experienced staff. They regularly refresh their own mandatory training and benefit from reflective and clinical supervision sessions. This ensures that staff have the necessary skills to meet the individual needs of the children.

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

Relationships between children and staff are consistently positive. Children report feeling safe and supported. It is evident from children's interactions with staff that they feel safe. Staff help them build secure and trusting relationships effectively. Staff are committed to developing these connections and to recognising their importance in helping children to settle and succeed. These nurturing and reliable relationships play a vital role in enabling children to understand and manage their feelings and emotions, as well as in reducing and de-escalating any challenging incidents.

When challenging situations arise and children face difficulties, staff provide calm and consistent support. Children are helped both during incidents and afterwards, with staff guiding them to repair any harm that may have been caused and to reflect on what happened. One child said, 'They [residential staff] will get us together to hold mediation sessions and sort things out.' This approach helps children to build and maintain positive relationships, develop a sense of accountability and strengthen their understanding of empathy.

Restrictive interventions, such as single separation and being managed away, are used only when necessary and in line with legal requirements to ensure the safety of all children. Throughout the use of any restrictive measure, staff provide continuous reassurance and support. As soon as the legal criteria are no longer met, the child is promptly reintegrated into the group. Meaningful conversations take place to help the child reflect on the behaviours that led to the intervention. There is a clear focus on reducing the risk of recurrence and supporting positive future choices.

Children are physically held only as a last resort and only when all de-escalation techniques have been exhausted. Staff ensure that any physical intervention is carried out with dignity and respect and that it is as brief and safe as possible. Strong working relationships with health professionals support a consistent focus on children's physical, psychological and emotional safety following any incident. Post-incident conversations with staff and children promote learning and development, reflecting on what support the child may need and how future situations can be managed differently. This approach contributes to a reduction in the use of physical intervention for children.

Children are supported to understand risk and how to keep themselves as safe as possible. Intervention work is designed around each child's needs, focusing on helping them recognise their emotions, understand their feelings and explore effective ways to manage them with or without staff support. Targeted sessions help children recognise positive role models and understand the influence of social media, and learn about keeping safe online, safety in the community, healthy relationships, safe people and more.

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

The registered manager has established a positive working culture that is open and encourages everyone to contribute ideas and to safely challenge. She has clear oversight of the strengths and areas for improvement of the service, alongside a vision for the future that has the best care for children at its core. When there are difficulties or challenges, she ensures that these are identified and that actions are taken, including in education. This supports continuous development and progress.

The registered manager's dedication to both the wellbeing and development of those in her care, along with fostering an environment of respect and attentiveness, creates a strong foundation for positive outcomes for children. The emphasis on learning and growth not only benefits the children and staff but also sets a tone for continuous improvement. The manager and the management team are focused on making real, lasting progress for the children, ensuring that their welfare and development are always at the forefront of the care that they provide.

The registered manager leads a healthy, learning and reflective ethos where all staff at all levels can be professionally curious and challenging. Staff complete the mandatory training required. They also receive bespoke training that is tailored to the needs of the

children. This provides a stable, consistent, learning and ever-evolving environment where vulnerable children benefit from a skilled and integrated workforce.

The recognition and promotion of equality and diversity are strong. The manager and the deputy manager bring valuable insight into meeting the cultural and religious needs of children, drawing on their experience of the Black Charter, and work with children from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Staff receive bespoke training to ensure children's cultural and individual needs are fully met. This includes practical learning, such as being taught how to braid children's hair, to ensure care is sensitive, respectful and inclusive. This contributes to the bespoke and nurturing care for each child.

Effective management systems are in place. Children's records are of a good standard and provide details of the nurturing care provided. Regular audits take place to ensure that plans are dynamic in nature and change with the child. This supports the progression and achievement of children's goals for their future.

Staff experience a high level of support through regular one-to-one meetings, practice sessions and team meetings. These are reflective and mean that staff can learn lessons and adapt their own practice. However, discussions about wider safeguarding issues do not routinely take place.

The average occupancy level has been at 75%. The number of children currently living at the home is less than the number of available places because two places are only used when appropriate to prepare children for moving on, to support children to develop independent living skills or for children who require higher levels of support away from other children. During the past year, children have been looked after who required increased staffing ratios to meet their needs.

## What does the secure 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (8) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans; and</p> <p>that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child’s learning. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ix)(x)(b))</p> <p>This specifically relates to managers’ implementation of formal systematic quality assurance to monitor and consistently improve teaching, learning and assessment and ensuring that staff implement and maintain a formal, systematic tracking system that monitors each child’s progress from their starting points, identifies gaps in learning and supports children in achieving their educational and training targets. In addition, managers must ensure a sustained and appropriate staffing structure of teaching staff who hold relevant subject and vocational qualifications.</p>	<p>27 February 2026</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the content and/or outcomes of one-to-one sessions with staff and team meetings reflect discussion on safeguarding issues which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs and external wider risks of children assigned to their care. In addition, that if safeguarding issues arise from allegations, these should be fully explored and appropriate retraining should be provided to staff when required. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should ensure the home works in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. In particular, the registered person must ensure that interpreters are sourced to facilitate telephone contact for children and their families where needed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

## 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'.

## Secure children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC035409

**Provision sub-type:** Secure unit

**Registered provider:** Northumberland County Council

**Registered provider address:** County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF

**Responsible individual:** Adam Hall

**Registered manager:** Julie Tinkler

## Inspectors

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

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