Clayfields House Secure Unit

Registered provider name: Nottinghamshire County Council
Registered provider address: Clayfields House Secure Unit, 18-20 Moorbridge Lane, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 8GU

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict children's liberty.

The home can accommodate up to 20 children aged between 10 and 17 years. Up to 12 children can be placed by the Youth Custody Service and up to 8 children can be accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. 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 14 children living at the home at the time of 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 in May 2018.

The inspection started on 28 April 2026. Inspectors returned on 13 May and 24 June 2026 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious child protection allegations were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Inspection dates: 28 April to 30 April 2026, 13 May 2026 and 24 June 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	**requires improvement to be good**

Children's education and learning	outstanding
Children's health	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

'The secure children's home provides services that requires improvement to be good.

Date of last inspection: 5 August 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/08/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/09/2024	Full	Good
23/01/2024	Full	Good
24/10/2023	Full	Inadequate

Summary of findings

After completion of the full inspection, two further visits were undertaken to gather additional evidence. The first was in response to two serious allegations that inspectors were not informed of during the full inspection. The second visit took place following concerns shared with Ofsted about the restraint of a child. It was found that this restraint was not necessary, and that the registered manager's review of practice did not identify the relevant learning from this incident or robustly test whether the legal threshold for intervention had been met.

There are some shortfalls in management oversight, and some significant incidents have not been reported to Ofsted. Furthermore, staff do not always follow children's safety plans. Notwithstanding, children say that they like living at the home, that they enjoy the activities that they do and that their health improves. Children also make rapid and often substantial progress in their education.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Due to the shortfalls in safeguarding practice, this has impacted on some children's overall experiences. Staff do not always follow children's plans, and some children have therefore experienced incidents that could have been avoided. As a result, this has impacted on their safety, welfare and overall experience.

Children told inspectors that they like living at the home and that they have positive relationships with all staff. They enjoy the activities available to them, such as pool, football and computer games. Children spoke positively about their education and say that their health needs are being met.

Children are supported by staff and the resettlement team to spend time in the community. This ensures that children engage in positive activities and develop beneficial routines for when they leave the home. For example, one child attends a sports club during their release on temporary licence as part of their progression towards their onward move. Furthermore, the team helps children develop strategies to respond to risks they may encounter and to manage their emotions, both now and in the future.

A diverse team of staff is reflective of children's heritage and backgrounds, which helps children to feel a sense of belonging. Staff use their experiences and ability to speak other languages to build positive relationships with the children.

Staff support some children to prepare for moving to the adult prison estate. Staff with recent experience of working in adult settings help children understand what to expect. After a child or young person moves on, staff visit them in their new setting. This

supports the child or young person to maintain meaningful relationships and allows staff to gather feedback so they can improve the experience for other children in the future.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with their families. One parent said that their child receives the most support that they have ever had, and that the staff are supporting their child to understand the reasons they are living at the home.

Children's education and learning: outstanding

Children make rapid and often substantial progress from their starting points. Most work towards and achieve qualifications, including GCSEs and functional skills, within a relatively short time from sometimes very low starting points. Children develop highly positive attitudes to learning, sustaining concentration, showing resilience when faced with challenge and demonstrating a strong desire to succeed. They are proud of their work and gain increasing confidence in their abilities. For example, one child who initially struggled with communication and confidence now engages positively in learning and aspires to complete examinations.

Education staff carry out timely, thorough and precise initial assessments as soon as children arrive. They use this information very effectively to develop highly personalised learning programmes that meet children's academic, social and emotional needs. Children benefit from a broad and carefully structured curriculum that combines core academic subjects with a wide range of vocational opportunities. These include construction, catering, motor mechanics and creative arts, which help children to build confidence, develop practical skills and prepare well for their next steps.

Education staff plan and teach the curriculum well. They provide regular opportunities for children to revisit and build on prior learning, enabling them to develop secure knowledge and skills over time. In lessons, education staff support children effectively to remain focused and engaged. For example, children confidently collaborate to plan and deliver podcasts, developing their oracy skills, independence and confidence. In practical subjects, children produce work of a high standard, such as designing and making items for family members, and they take pride in their achievements.

Children's education and learning are extremely effective. Education leaders and education staff are highly committed to ensuring that children achieve their full potential. They establish a safe, calm and purposeful environment in which children feel valued and supported. As a result, children re-engage quickly with learning, enjoy their lessons and participate well, including those who have previously had very negative experiences of education.

Education staff build highly positive, trusting and respectful relationships with children. They act as excellent role models and have consistently high expectations. As a result, behaviour in education is positive and children contribute to a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Education leaders place a strong emphasis on children's personal development and ensure that this is embedded across all aspects of the curriculum. Children develop a strong understanding of their behaviours, reflect on their experiences and learn to make positive choices. They benefit from effective careers education and guidance, which helps them to identify and work towards their aspirations.

Education leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision and take appropriate action to address the few areas for improvement. In a small number of cases, targets, particularly in reading, are not precise enough to measure progress as effectively as they could. However, this does not detract from the highly effective provision overall.

Children's health: good

When children arrive at the home, the health team carries out an assessment to ensure that any immediate health needs can be met. Children are then further assessed using comprehensive health assessment tools to identify mental health, substance misuse and physical health needs. Staff across the wider team engage closely with each other, sharing information so that the needs of the children can be met and improved in a timely and supportive way.

The small specialist health team at the home is at some risk should a staff member be absent for a prolonged period. There is limited provision available in some areas of specialism, such as speech and language services. Staff adapt and seek out support where they can, but there has been at least one occasion when meeting a child's immediate healthcare needs has been delayed.

Children requiring assessments for autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and sensory and cognitive needs are assessed in a timely way so that, when appropriate, a diagnosis can be made and appropriate care and support can be put in place to improve the child's outcomes.

The assistant psychologist completes work with parents and carers to help them to better understand the reasons for their children's behaviours, including when a neurodivergent diagnosis is made. This means that families can better support their children and plan for their transition home to reduce children's anxieties.

Newly appointed staff at the home receive bespoke training as part of their induction package, which includes ADHD, autism and trauma. This ensures that staff have the understanding to adapt their interactions with the children, helping them to improve their relationships with and the experiences of those children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children's safety plans are not always followed by all staff and some staff have failed to enforce planned separation measures, resulting in children spending time together when they should not. During one incident, a child sustained an injury because their separation plan was not implemented.

Staff do not always manage supervision safely during challenging situations. During a different incident, 3 children were left unsupervised while staff responded to a separate matter. No harm came to the children during this time, but the risk to the children was not managed appropriately.

Other restrictive measures, such as single separation (a child locked into an area alone as they pose a significant risk to themselves or others) and managed away (the same as single separation but children are always with a staff member), are only used as a last resort. Children are supported to understand the reasons why these measures are used. Children are supported to rejoin the group as soon as it is safe to do so.

Children are supported to learn from their choices through reflective discussions with staff. Children speak positively about this, saying that it helps them to reflect, take accountability and make better choices in the future.

Children who were spoken with said that they feel safe living in the home and have positive relationships with staff, who sensitively support them to understand the complex factors, including exploitation, that led to them moving into the home. This individualised support helps children make sense of their past experiences and helps to build their personal resilience.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Management oversight is not always sufficiently robust or effective. There have been a small number of serious incidents that have left some children in unsuitable or unsafe situations, even when plans to separate children are in place for their wellbeing. The recording of significant incidents is sometimes basic or disjointed or lacks sufficient detail. This makes it difficult to fully understand what has happened and potentially hinders learning to improve future practise. Quality assurance mechanisms are not always effective in identifying these weaknesses, and appropriate actions are not always taken. This includes notifying Ofsted of all serious incidents or apologising to children when incidents could have been avoided.

On one occasion, a child was subject to an unnecessary physical restraint, which was not recognised by managers. This incident was referred to the local authority designated officer (LADO) after Ofsted was notified of concerns from a member of staff at the home. There are conflicting accounts from staff and managers involved in the incident. Leaders have not sufficiently explored this or addressed the recording concerns as

identified by inspectors. While some learning has been identified from this serious incident, there is a missed opportunity to reinforce legal requirements with staff on the appropriate use of physical restraints. While this was an isolated incident and most restraint practice is necessary and proportionate, such incidents impact negatively on children. Following this incident, the child shared that the restraint was not needed, and they are worried it will happen again.

Some notifications lack sufficient detail regarding the immediate response and the specific strategies implemented to prevent recurrence. This prevents the regulator from maintaining a full overview of the actions taken to safeguard children.

Allegations from children are taken seriously and are referred to the LADO.

Relationships between care, health and education professionals have improved, leading to clear direction in leadership that supports staff practice with children.

Staff receive regular supervision. Staff say that their managers are approachable and that they feel confident to raise concerns about staff conduct. Supervision sessions are reflective and enable staff to think about their practice and the impact on children's progress. Regular sessions provide a safe space for professional curiosity, ensuring that staff feel supported to meet children's complex needs. However, staff are not always supported or encouraged to speak to children when they get things wrong.

All staff have completed mandatory training, including safeguarding, first aid and physical restraint. To enhance their professional practice, staff also complete child-specific training tailored to individual needs, such as in child sexual exploitation, gangs and county lines. This ensures that the care they deliver is well informed and assists staff understanding so they can support each child's individual needs.

The average occupancy level has been 76.44% in the last 12 months, which is lower than usual. This is because part of the home has been closed due to ongoing renovations.

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
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that their oversight and review of records, predominantly relating to physical intervention, are robust and holistic. Managers should identify relevant learning and accountability that contributes to a strong safeguarding culture and positive relationships between staff and children.	31 July 2026
Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (2))	24 July 2026

The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; and understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v))	14 August 2026
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that children have access to speech and language support when required.	14 August 2026
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	14 August 2026

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: SC036740

Provision sub-type: Secure Unit

Registered provider name: Nottinghamshire County Council

Registered provider address: Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

Responsible individual: Jennifer Whiston

Registered manager: Paul Thomas

Inspectors

28 April to 30 April 2026
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector
Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector
Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector
Carolyn Brownsea, His Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills
Daniel Carrick, Children's Services Inspector, Care Quality Commission
Sylvia Eboigbe, Quality Assurance Manager

13 May 2026
Gemma McDonnell, Social Care Inspector
Shaun Common, His Majesty's Inspector, Quality Assurance Manager

24 June 2026
Leanne Lyon, Social Care Inspector
Tash Williams, Quality Assurance Manager

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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