

1223201

Registered provider: Leeds City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home is currently undergoing a period of leadership transition. A new manager has been appointed and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. Both the outgoing and incoming managers contributed to this inspection.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home. Three children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2024	Full	Good
08/11/2023	Full	Good
14/03/2023	Full	Good
18/08/2021	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children in this home are living in an environment that does not promote a sense of belonging. There is significant damage in the home. There are items in need of replacement and areas that are unclean, including a broken window where there has been a delay in repairs. Although the manager is aware of these issues and explains that maintenance is slow, the response has not been effective.

Not all children are supported to develop positive relationships with one another. As a result, some children have felt unsafe when other children have been in periods of crisis or emotional distress. This is not in line with children's care plans that clearly state they should live in a home that is free from conflict and emotional upset.

One child has had a prolonged absence from the home. Although staff have made several efforts to encourage the child to return, these attempts have not been successful. Furthermore, the current issues with the home environment are not encouraging the child to return.

More recently, staff sufficiency has become a concern due to staff absences and the increased reliance on agency staff. One child is particularly unsettled by the presence of new staff, which has caused further upset and anxiety in the home.

Children speak positively about the activities available to them. They enjoy outings to the funfair and the local bike park and feel they are given choices about how they spend their time. This helps to promote their sense of choice and supports their social development.

Three children living at the home are currently attending education. Staff also support children to explore alternative opportunities, such as voluntary work. This approach helps to build children's confidence in training and education, increasing their prospects for the future.

Staff speak positively about the children and demonstrate respect and understanding of their past experiences. This helps children to feel accepted by the staff. As a result, children reported having at least one member of trusted staff they can talk to if needed.

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

Children have reported feeling unsafe at times in the home. One child expressed concern that another child could enter their bedroom without permission, as they had obtained a key to the child's room. Despite assurances from managers and staff that the key had been retrieved, it happened again during the inspection. This leads to increased feelings of vulnerability among children and a lack of trust in the staff's ability to keep children safe.

Staff have not consistently followed policies and procedures. Notably, the fire evacuation procedure was not followed when the fire alarm was activated. This left two children feeling unsafe and unsettled. This failure undermines children's trust in the staff's ability to keep them safe and places them at unnecessary risk.

Risk assessments are poor and do not contain clear, individualised strategies to guide staff in managing known risks. Furthermore, safety plans for children remain generic and do not reflect children's individual needs. This is particularly concerning given the increased use of agency staff in the home, who rely on these documents to provide direction to safeguard children effectively.

Children have been supported to understand the risks associated with going missing from home, which has contributed to a reduction in missing-from-home episodes. When children do go missing, staff actively look for them and welcome them back to the home. Staff engage children in meaningful conversations to understand where they have been and the reasons behind their absence, helping to inform future support and planning.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been a change in management during this inspection period. The handover to the new manager has not been sufficiently thorough. Important information, including the full details of children's individual plans, has not been shared effectively. This lack of oversight, combined with a period of high levels of staff absences, has contributed to a deterioration in the quality of care. As a result, the current standard of provision in the home does not fully meet the needs of the children.

Pathway plans for older children are of poor quality and lack detail. Managers do not consistently challenge these shortfalls with the children's social workers. As a result, these plans do not adequately focus on the individual needs of children or support their preparation for adulthood. While there is evidence of one child's plan being challenged with the local authority, this is not consistent practice in the home.

There are gaps in the frequency and consistency of staff supervision sessions. The quality of recording is variable, with limited context or reflective discussion in some cases. Supervision does include discussion about training, development and progress with qualifications, which is a positive aspect.

While staff generally feel supported by managers, some express frustration with how certain situations are managed. Staff have raised concerns that behaviour support plans are not effective for some children and feel that these plans sometimes conflict with the home's practice model. As a result, some staff report feeling burnt out, which has affected the quality of care provided to children.

Multi-agency working is positive. Managers engage well with partner agencies, and feedback from professionals is encouraging. In addition, managers build constructive relationships with children's parents and carers. This inclusive approach helps children feel that managers are invested in both them and the people who are important to them.

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
* 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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv)(vi))	5 October 2025
* 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;	5 October 2025

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(f))	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(c)(i))	5 October 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure 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 or in preparation for leaving the home, the home's manager challenges them to meet the child's needs. Pathway plans for those children preparing for adulthood should include all relevant information and plans to help them with this stage in their life. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

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: 1223201

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Merrion House, Merion Centre, Leeds LS2 8LX

Responsible individual: Benjamin Finley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jo Birtwhistle, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Rachel Fairhurst, His Majesty's Inspector

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