

1231405

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides residential short stays for up to six children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The home may provide care for one child to live long term. A local authority runs the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since February 2016.

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
21/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2022	Full	Good
28/11/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The short-break service continues to provide exceptional care.

Children experience their short breaks in small, compatible groups. The manager works closely with families and other professionals to understand the children's needs prior to them starting in the service. The manager ensures that children are introduced in a sensitive and supportive way through a series of visits at the child's own pace. As a result, children have opportunities to make new friends, take part in new experiences and enjoy new surroundings.

Everything achieved in the home is focused on making it an inclusive experience for children. Staff capture activities through photos and scrapbooks; this gives children a sense of increased self-worth and belonging. When the children leave the service, the staff collate memories of their journey and capture these in books. These are presented as gifts.

Children's emotional well-being is prioritised by the vast number of opportunities on offer for children, such as sensory play, day trips, interactive games and cooking. Consequently, children say that they like the activities and enjoy their time spent at the home. Since the last inspection, staff have organised a fundraising activity to purchase a specialist outdoor wheelchair. This helps to ensure that all activities are inclusive.

There is currently one child on an extended stay in the home. The dedicated and committed team has supported him to make excellent progress with his health and educational needs. Staff have worked collaboratively with health services to review the child's medication, dental and continence needs. Additionally, a recent school review showed an increase in his attendance. Professionals were positive about the support children receive in the home. One social worker said: 'The staff go above and beyond to support the families as well as the children.'

The feedback from families was tremendously positive. They said that communication was brilliant, and the children thoroughly enjoy staying in the home. One parent said: 'It's more than we could wish for.' Another parent spoke about how helpful the regular coffee mornings were as a place to meet others and express her worries.

Staff actively encourage the children to become more independent. They are learning life skills that they can use in the community when shopping. Others are developing their fine motor skills by making snacks for themselves and eating independently.

Diversity in the home is championed and celebrated. Recently, the children have learned about an artist and how she actively takes part in the inclusion movement. They created their own individual pieces of artwork to celebrate their differences to share with their families.

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

Safeguarding practice is extremely effective. The use of high levels of staffing significantly minimises the risk of harm. Staff regularly review risk management and care plans. Staff have a clear understanding of children's needs and vulnerabilities and the potential risks they may be exposed to. However, some risk management plans contain outdated language. A recommendation has been made to address this.

Children do not go missing from the home. The manager has recently been collaborating with the local police to devise a new information booklet, 'Know Me to Help Me', for children with complex needs. The booklet contains information about a child's risk, behaviours and vulnerabilities. This will help the local police force and local authorities to have access to necessary information to help reduce a child's risks in the community.

Staff are competent and understand the importance of meeting children's health needs. There is an effective system for safely administering and storing children's medication. This ensures that all children have the appropriate and correct medication that they need to maintain their well-being. Managers ensure that there is a suitable intimate care policy in place. It is child-friendly; staff support children to complete this when they start their stays. Staff fully adhere to the guidance in a manner that protects each child's rights and dignity.

Appropriate consideration is given to fire safety, with each child having a personal evacuation plan on file. The plan provides vital information to ensure children are safe in the event of a fire. Staff educate children about risk. They complete key-work sessions with children to help them understand areas of concern in relation to fire and internet safety.

When children become upset or distressed, staff use a variety of strategies to help them with their emotions, such as reassurance and distraction. Staff use pictorial communication aids to help children express how they feel. As a result, incidents are managed well, and restraint is not required.

Recruitment procedures and practices are safe and effective. All staff are checked and vetted before starting work. These checks ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children in the home.

Attendance and participation in child in need meetings, case conferences and reviews reflect the great emphasis placed on multi-agency and partnership links. Consequently, plans are detailed and up to date with accurate information to best meet the children's needs. There are effective working relationships with nurses, social workers and schools.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager has a wealth of experience and has worked in the home for many years; two assistants support her. They work well together and have developed a positive,

child-centred culture in the home. Managers are enthusiastic, aspirational and knowledgeable about the needs of the children. They strive to make continual improvements to ensure that children receive outstanding care.

Staff spoke about the level of teamwork and the supportive management team in place at the home. Together, they focus on the children's strengths and abilities. One staff member said: 'I absolutely love working in the home and seeing children thrive.'

Staff are highly skilled and receive specialist training. The manager ensures that staff are suitably trained prior to any child commencing their short break in the home. Staff know the children well. The inspector observed nurturing and gentle relationships between the children and staff.

Staff experience regular supervision sessions and team meetings. These provide an excellent forum for reflective practice and development. Staff have received their annual appraisals, in which they set goals and objectives for the year ahead. Additionally, effective handovers provide staff with excellent opportunities to share valuable information and generate innovative ideas.

The manager is passionate about staff developing their knowledge through research-informed theories and practice. The ethos of the home ensures that children thrive. The manager and staff recently sent home Christmas letters. This was an excellent way of bringing the research to life, capturing all children's achievements for the past year, no matter how small, and sharing these with families. This is a key strength of the service.

The registered manager's auditing and oversight are excellent. She ensures that parents and carers are very much involved in the development and review of children's care plans and risk assessments. Children's case records are child-friendly, up to date and signed.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of non-stigmatising language in records. For example, the use of words such as 'escape' should be removed from a child's plan. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 1231405

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Mike Nunn

Registered manager: Tracey Morris

Inspectors

Judith Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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