

1241782

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

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

At the time of this inspection, five children were living at the home. Three children spoke with the inspectors.

The home has not had a registered manager since August 2025. An acting manager is in place.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 14 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/10/2024	Full	Good
25/10/2023	Full	Good
20/09/2022	Full	Good
13/04/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

There have been significant changes in the staff and management team due to a reorganisation within the local authority. Five children have moved out of the home in planned moves to independent living or to live with family. Four new children have moved into the home. The impact of staff changes on the children currently living at the home has been limited as these changes coincided with the children's admissions.

Two children are currently not accessing education, and one child has only a very limited timetable. Staff have not consistently provided structured alternative daytime activities to promote routine and achievement. Managers acknowledge this shortfall and say that they are assembling resources to offer a more structured day, but these arrangements are not yet embedded.

Children are not consistently supported to maintain their bedrooms to an acceptable standard of cleanliness and tidiness. Some bedrooms have clothes on the floor, dirty dishes and takeaway wrappers. This impacts negatively on the children's overall living standards.

Children say that they are sometimes unsure of the boundaries and expectations as staff do not always consistently apply these.

Children enjoy positive day-to-day experiences and describe caring relationships with staff. There are warm, nurturing interactions between staff and children. Children benefit from positive experiences with staff, such as going on trips and holidays.

Staff support family relationships well, including arranging time for children to spend time with their family members. Children feel cared for and continue to have the opportunity to spend time with their families, which helps promote their identity and feeling of belonging.

When children move into the home, the moves are thoughtful and planned, giving children opportunities to meet staff and their peers before moving in. This helps children to settle into the home.

Children, some of whom have complex health needs, are supported by staff to manage their conditions independently, access appropriate health services and maintain their overall health.

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

An error occurred when a child was given the wrong medication. A fact-finding exercise was completed and actions were identified to prevent this happening again. However, scrutiny of records shows that children's medication records are not fully documented and there is no evidence of management oversight. The actions arising from the fact-finding exercise have not yet been fully implemented.

Staff's practice in response to children who go missing from the home is inconsistent. While episodes are reported promptly to the police, staff do not routinely conduct active searches. Historically, records relating to episodes of children going missing have been very brief. There has been some improvement to this in recent months, with more detailed records and a thorough response. Furthermore, there is a decrease in the number of times children are going missing from the home.

Children know how to make a complaint. When they make a complaint, they are taken seriously and their complaint is addressed. Children say that they feel listened to.

Staff share information and undertake safety planning in response to children who are at risk of exploitation. They have challenged partner agency responses when they judge these to be insufficient to ensure that children receive the right services to remain safe.

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

The manager is new in post and is not yet registered with Ofsted. He is supported by a deputy manager who has long-standing knowledge of the setting and an assistant manager who demonstrates a strong child focus. The management team members are still developing the way they work together. Initial difficulties with communication have resulted in some staff reporting that they do not feel supported. Managers are aware of these issues and have implemented a plan to address them.

Behaviour management records and incident reports do not demonstrate sufficient managerial oversight. They are not subject to consistent, rigorous evaluation, nor are they analysed to identify learning opportunities. This lack of scrutiny undermines the delivery of consistent messages to children and limits the provider's ability to assess and refine strategies that promote positive behaviour.

Supervision sessions occur regularly. They primarily focus on operational matters and reinforcing staff responsibilities. Records of supervision and team meetings lack a clear focus on the experiences and needs of children. Staff do not use these opportunities to reflect meaningfully on their practice or the impact of their work with children.

The manager demonstrates professional challenge to partner agencies to ensure that children receive the appropriate resources and support to meet their needs.

Professionals provide highly positive feedback about children's placements at the home. They say that staff offer strong support for family contact, communicate effectively and ensure that children's health needs are met.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; 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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(ix)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when children are not in education, there is clear structure and routine in place at the home to support independent study.	4 January 2026
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.	4 January 2026

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all incidents are evaluated with scrutiny, taking into consideration any possible learning outcomes that can be implemented within children’s risk management plans, or to support the development of staff.	
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; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(v)(vi)(c)(i)(ii))	4 January 2026

In particular, the registered person must ensure that children's bedrooms are clean, tidy and free from any health and safety hazards.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that medication records are completed, dated and signed legibly when medication is administered.	4 January 2026
The registered person must ensure that— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vi)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when consequences are used, they are subject to scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and that they are also restorative in nature and not punitive.	4 January 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that there is a clear system in place to record room searches and follow-up actions when they occur. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are provided with good-quality supervisions that give them opportunities to reflect on their practice and to discuss their ongoing development. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: 1241782

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Registered provider address: Lancashire County Council, PO Box 100, Preston PR1 0LD

Responsible individual: Tracey Sykes

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cathy Wilkins, Social Care Inspector
Hayley Smith, Social Care Inspector

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