

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 operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children who may have emotional or behavioural needs. There were five children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager in place who registered with Ofsted in December 2016.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 3 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/09/2019	Full	Good
14/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2018	Full	Good
08/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive a good standard of care from staff who know them well and understand their needs. This promotes children's well-being and supports their good progress.

A community health professional, who works closely with a child who lives at the home, described the staff team as highly skilled. She reported that the child had made significant progress, which she felt was due to her positive relationships with staff and the nurturing ethos of the home.

Children have been supported to maintain valued relationships throughout the pandemic. Rapid testing is effectively utilised to provide further safeguards and reassure family members, prior to contact visits.

Some children are making very good progress in education. Others face personal barriers to learning, which staff understand. Staff closely support children to overcome these challenges and communicate well with external partners to ensure that children have the necessary provision and support.

The quality of direct work with children is a particular strength of this home. The use of research-based communication tools has been highly successful in supporting children to engage in meaningful conversations and express their views, thoughts and wishes.

Children who are joining or leaving the home are well-supported and benefit from well-planned transitions. One child spoke positively about the support she is receiving to prepare for independence. She described how she has grown in confidence and felt that this was due to the help she has received from staff.

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

Known risks to children's safety and well-being have reduced since their admission. Children are not missing from home as frequently or for as long, which means that they are safer and less likely to experience harm. Good quality one-to-one work regularly takes place with children to help them increase their understanding of personal safety.

Overall relationships between children are settled. However, there have been isolated incidents of negative behaviour towards each other. The manager takes appropriate action when such incidents occur, to help ensure that risks are identified and managed.

The manager is particularly effective in ensuring that multi-agency agreement and planning is in place to manage risks to children. He reports any safeguarding concerns promptly and frequently requests multi-agency risk management meetings so that strategies can be discussed and agreed upon.

Staff demonstrate clear understanding of the actions required to protect children from harm. Written guidance is generally well-detailed although in one example, further clarity regarding expectations of staff would be useful. In other examples, risks relating to a child smoking and the use of a mobile phone were not clearly identified or assessed.

Staff have very good insight into children's behaviours. They understand why children may present certain behaviours and they approach situations in a sensitive but confident manner. Staff are skilled in de-escalating heightened situations.

At times, staff use consequences as a way of helping children understand the impact of their behaviours. This area would benefit from review, to ensure that the use of consequences is consistent and regularly monitored for effectiveness.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home's manager registered with Ofsted in December 2016. He is a leader who is highly attuned to the needs of children and staff alike and has the ability to develop warm, respectful relationships with children, staff and external professionals. The manager has additional expertise in positive behaviour support and is an approved trainer across the authority.

Since the last inspection, the provider has made improvements in the manner in which the admission of new children is considered. More careful assessment of children's needs and improved matching means that children are less likely to experience negative outcomes.

Staff are highly complimentary about the leadership of the home. They present as well-motivated and are clearly proud of the support they provide to children. Staff turnover is extremely low, with only one staff member moving on (for a development opportunity) in several years. In addition, every member of the team holds a nationally recognised qualification in children's residential care.

Some aspects of monitoring, in particular, those directly related to children's progress and outcomes were identified as an area for progress at the last inspection and have improved. However, there is room for further improvement in other aspects of monitoring for example, that of staff training and environmental standards, which are areas where minor shortfalls were identified in the inspection.

Currently there is no formal system in place to gather feedback from children, staff or external stakeholders. The manager does invite feedback on an ongoing basis for example, during meetings or direct work with children. However, the lack of formal consultation at regular intervals means that the manager's ability to identify areas for improvement and to inform his six-monthly quality of care review is limited. Consultation with children and other stakeholders during monthly visits by the independent visitor also requires improvement.

There have been a small number of significant incidents within the home which have not been reported to Ofsted. Failure to notify Ofsted of significant events impedes our ability to monitor services effectively and therefore fails to promote children's safety and wellbeing.

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, 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 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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)) This requirement specifically relates to the need to ensure that identified risks are fully assessed and that clear risk management plans are in place.	21 May 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	21 May 2021
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44(1)(2)(a))	21 May 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should make best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. In particular, ensure that the views of children and other stakeholders are obtained. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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 address: PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Mark Davies

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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