

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 with social and emotional difficulties. There were five children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2016.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 13 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/04/2021	Full	Good
03/09/2019	Full	Good
14/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are cared for by staff who know them well. Some children are making good progress in all aspects of their lives, while outcomes for other children are mixed.

Some children are in good routines and attend school and college regularly. They travel to and from education independently. One child has a part-time job and aspires for a future career in childcare. Prior to living in this home, this child had erratic school attendance. One social worker said, 'Staff give [name of child] lots of praise and encouragement. This has supported her to build her confidence. She is much more motivated to succeed.'

Staff understand the importance of education and the barriers some children face in engaging with it. Staff are persistent in their attempts to interest and re-engage children with education. However, for one child, there is no clear plan about how staff should support re-engagement, and there is a lack of structure to the child's day. This will have an impact on the child's long-term outcomes if not addressed quickly. A requirement is made to address this.

Most of the children have friends in the local community, who they enjoy spending time with. Staff encourage children to pursue their individual interests and to try new things. For example, one child has recently enjoyed attending a live music concert for the first time. In addition, some children are learning skills, such as budgeting and cooking meals, which will prepare them for independent living.

Staff are skilled at building relationships with children. They invest time in children and actively seek opportunities to engage them and develop shared interests. However, one child is not settling well into the home. The manager has raised his concerns with the child's local authority. However, the manager has not requested a review of the child's placement to ensure the child's needs are being appropriately met.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's needs and how they should support them. However, children's care plans lack important details about the strategies staff are using to support children to make progress. For example, the use of incentives is proving successful in reducing one child's motivation to go missing from care, yet this approach is not detailed in the child's plan. A requirement under the care planning standard is made to address this.

Poor routines are having an impact on the outcomes of two children living at the home. Staff have not yet been successful in embedding a good night-time routine, and these children are staying up late playing computer games and not getting up in the morning. Staff are encouraging children to adopt good routines but there has been indecision from managers about the best approach to take. This drift in

decision-making is hampering staff's efforts to give children clear, consistent boundaries.

Children are supported to spend time with their families and people who are important to them. Careful planning has resulted in some children spending more time with their families. Staff have recently helped to organise a short holiday for one child with their family.

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

Staff have a good understanding of children's behaviours and individual vulnerabilities. Staff confidently manage complex and challenging situations and take appropriate actions to keep children safe.

All children have detailed risk management plans that support staff to care for them safely and consistently. These plans are kept under review and are updated following significant incidents.

The manager is quick to respond to emerging risks for children and collaborates on a multi-agency basis to safeguard children. For example, when risks associated with one child's mental health started to escalate, the manager was proactive in taking steps to minimise the risks. He alerted relevant professionals to the concerns about the child's welfare and secured additional resources to help safeguard the child.

Children are going missing from care less frequently. There are robust procedures in place for staff to follow if a child does go missing from the home. This helps to ensure that staff take swift and effective action to locate the child. On their return to the home, children are always offered an interview by an independent person.

Staff use rewards and praise to reinforce positive behaviours. Consequences to address children's poor behaviour are not used often. However, the manager does not always review the records of sanctions given to children. This limits his ability to ensure that consequences are proportionate and effective in securing changes in children's behaviours.

Staff rarely use physical holds to manage children's behaviours. Staff are skilled at diffusing challenging situations quickly and calmly. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the individual approaches they should take with each child. However, these behaviour management strategies are not well documented in children's records. This could lead to staff adopting inconsistent approaches.

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

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified for the role. He is a visible and approachable leader. The manager enjoys spending time with the children and has good relationships with them. However, there are shortfalls in the

manager's monitoring systems, which impair his ability to understand the quality of care provided to children and the progress they are making.

The manager's monitoring system is not sufficiently robust to identify shortfalls in care planning standards. Some children's care plans lack important details about how staff should support children. There have been indecisions and a lack of guidance for staff about how to support one child to adopt a good daily routine. This has led to a lack of effective action to address the child's behaviour and an uncoordinated approach from staff to the issue.

Shortfalls were identified in the quality of record-keeping at the home. For example, records are not consistently kept when children's bedrooms are searched or when rewards have been given to children for positive behaviour. This hampers the manager's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of staff actions. Records of staff handovers between shifts are of poor quality and omit important details.

There have been delays in notifying Ofsted and other relevant professionals of significant events in the home. This hinders Ofsted's ability to review the information in a timely way and to ensure that the provider has taken the necessary action. A requirement has been made to address this.

The home's statement of purpose has not been kept under regular review. The manager took steps during the inspection to address this.

There is high staff retention, and this means that children benefit from continuity of care. Staff report that they feel supported and valued by their manager. One member of staff said, 'Managers have been available for advice and leadership direction whenever I have required their assistance. I cannot praise them enough. They have helped me develop and grow into my role.'

Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme, which equips them with the skills they need to work with vulnerable children. In addition, all staff hold nationally recognised childcare qualifications.

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(e)(i))	4 November 2022
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— help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(viii))	4 November 2022
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 November 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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)(f)(h))	
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))	4 November 2022
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	4 November 2022

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: PO Box 78, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Mark Davies

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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