

1247212

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company runs this children's home. It is registered to provide care for up to 4 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025.

All 4 children spoke to the inspectors about their experiences of living in the home.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 February 2026

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: 5 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2025	Full	Good
21/11/2023	Full	Good
28/02/2023	Full	Good
19/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Transitions into and out of the home are carefully planned, and when children move on, staff continue to maintain positive relationships and offer direct support where needed.

Since moving into the home, children have made notable progress from their starting points. This includes improved behaviour, increased attendance and engagement in their education and enjoyment in activities, including experiences such as going on an aeroplane for the first time. Children spoke positively about their daily experiences, the care and support they receive, and the strong, trusting relationships they have built with most staff.

Children benefit from appropriate health arrangements in the home. Their health support plans are kept up to date and clearly detail their needs and scheduled appointments, and the outcomes of these. All children have access to the in-house therapist, which has contributed to improved emotional stability and the development of effective coping strategies.

Family time is actively encouraged, as staff recognise how important it is for children to rebuild or maintain these significant relationships. Staff routinely review family-time arrangements to ensure that they remain safe and appropriate, and they work closely with professionals if any concerns arise. Children are also supported to form new friendships in the local community, and their friends are warmly welcomed into the home.

The manager and staff ensure that children are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions daily, and this insight is used to inform their care. Direct work sessions take place regularly and are recorded to a good standard. Children say these sessions help them to understand risks and think about their goals for the future. When children need support to manage their emotions, staff use creative and child-friendly methods to help them learn a range of coping strategies.

All the children spoke positively about living in the home and the difference it has made in their lives. They know how to make a complaint, feel listened to and are confident that the manager acts when they raise concerns. Children describe most staff as supportive and approachable, noting that they enjoy going out on activities with them.

Children's bedrooms are not consistently maintained to a high standard, and some areas of the home require redecoration. The bathrooms are also tired and require action to ensure that they are clean, safe spaces.

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

Staff provide children with clear boundaries, structure and consistent routines. This plays a key role in keeping children safe and helps them to feel protected. Children know that staff care about them, and that, despite being unhappy about the 'rules', the boundaries in place are age appropriate.

Staff have not needed to use physical intervention to minimise risks. Staff have used their relationships with children to divert unwanted behaviours and talk to children throughout incidents to support them in making safe choices. Behaviour support plans help staff to understand how to respond to negative behaviours. Some of these plans use children's favourite soap characters to promote children's participation in formulating the support they receive. These actions have reduced behavioural incidents in the home.

Staff encourage positive behaviour through praise and rewards. When children display negative behaviour, natural consequences are used, and children are supported to reflect on their actions and consider alternative responses for the future. However, staff do not consistently document how consequences are applied or how children are supported to earn back items that have been removed. This lack of recording makes it difficult to ensure consistency or track any patterns to identify improvements needed.

Incidents in the home have reduced significantly. When incidents do occur, staff manage them confidently. Staff hold reflective discussions with children after incidents to help them develop healthier ways to manage their emotions and reduce the likelihood of future incidents. This consistent approach has been central to the overall reduction in incidents.

Episodes of children going missing from home have reduced. Staff consistently follow the missing-from-home protocol whenever this occurs. Staff are proactive in searching for children until they are safely located. Staff work effectively with professionals, families and friends to support children's safe return. Children are always offered an independent return home interview, and staff take time to reconnect with them afterwards, holding one-to-one discussions about the risks associated with going missing and how they can keep themselves safe.

Staff work alongside children to support them in taking age-appropriate risks. Any reduction in restrictions is carefully considered, considering each child's ability to manage increased independence, with a strong focus on safety education and overall wellbeing. When concerns arise and restrictions need to be reinstated, this is done only as a short-term measure. The manager continually reviews and evaluates risks to ensure that the arrangements in place remain appropriate and are in line with the children's needs.

Children's rooms are searched when it is required to do so to keep them safe. These are completed sensitively and, when possible, in consultation with children.

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

The staff and children benefit from strong leadership in the home, with a registered manager who is committed and child-centred in all aspects of practice and who consistently goes above and beyond. The registered manager is confident in challenging organisational decisions when they are not in the best interests of the children or aligned with the Children's Homes Regulations.

The registered manager, deputies and responsible individual hold high aspirations for the children and work consistently to improve their outcomes. They provide clear guidance and direction to staff, which enables children to make meaningful progress.

The homes management team has a thorough understanding of each child's needs and what is required to help them develop. They actively listen to children's views and ensure that their voices remain central to decision-making. The registered manager advocates confidently on behalf of the children and challenges external professionals when necessary.

The wider organisational senior leadership team has been fractured, and this has affected stability across the organisation. Over the past year, there have been several changes within the senior leadership structure, and this instability has influenced the overall consistency and direction provided at a senior level. These changes have also raised concerns about the organisation's financial stability. Further disruption is expected, as the chief executive officer, responsible individual and deputies are all due to leave the organisation imminently.

Team meetings place strong emphasis on children's progress and ensure consistent staff practice in relation to routines and expectations in the home. The manager uses creative approaches to engage staff during meetings and to deepen their understanding of their roles. However, records do not consistently demonstrate that discussions taking place are balanced and appropriate, with the use of inappropriate terminology to describe managers and professionals.

Supervisions and appraisals take place regularly, with managers prioritising discussions about the children and how staff can best support their progress. Staff can take part in training that ensures they have the skills and knowledge to meet children's individual needs. However, some staff have not achieved the relevant qualification within the required timescales.

Staff rotas are not always updated to accurately reflect who is working in the home, and they do not consistently include the manager's hours, which limits the overall clarity of which staff are on shift caring for the children.

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
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b))	10 March 2026
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	10 March 2026

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the rota is accurate and up to date and includes the exact hours worked by managers and 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 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)(b) (2)(c)(i) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that work planned for children is proactive and individual to that child's presenting needs. In addition, children should be provided with appropriate furniture and decoration in their bedrooms.	10 March 2026
The registered provider must carry on the children's home in such manner as is likely to ensure that the home will be financially viable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose. The registered person must— ensure that adequate financial records are maintained and kept up to date in respect of the home; and supply a copy of the financial records and most recent accounts to HMCI at HMCI's request. The registered person must provide HMCI with such information as HMCI may require for the purpose of considering the financial viability of the home, including— the annual accounts of the home certified by an accountant;	13 February 2026

a reference from a bank expressing an opinion as to the registered provider's financial standing; information as to the financing, and financial resources, of the home and the registered provider; and where the registered provider is a company, information as to any of its associated companies. For the purposes of this regulation a company is an associated company of another company if one of the companies has control of the other company or both companies are under the control of the same person. Regulation (47) (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Regulation (36) (1)(b)(c)	10 March 2026

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: 1247212

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Registered provider address: Malthouse Business Centre, 48 Southport Road,
Ormskirk L39 1QR

Responsible individual: post vacant

Registered manager: Katie Holden

Inspectors

Michelle Edge, Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Jackson, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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