

2508344

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living at the home.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2026

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: 1 April 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/04/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/07/2024	Full	Good
21/11/2023	Full	Good
10/01/2023	Full	Outstanding

Summary of findings

Children have made some progress while living at this home. They have positive relationships with staff, and they benefit from consistent daily routines. The staff celebrate children's achievements. However, there are still many areas that require improvement. There has not been a registered manager in post since October 2025. Changes in management have affected staff morale and confidence. Some shortfalls identified at the monitoring visit in November 2025 have not been adequately addressed. As a result, the child's care and protection are not yet consistently at a good standard.

Inspection judgements

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

The home offers children a welcoming, spacious environment with opportunities for learning and creativity to support their development. Children are encouraged to express themselves through imaginative and immersive play with various props and toys in line with their interests, including a dinosaur-themed playroom. The children's individual personalities shine through in their bedrooms, which are personalised with their certificates, keepsakes and artwork, and photos of the children are displayed throughout the home.

Children are in a good routine. They enjoy meals around the dinner table with staff, and bedtime routines are firmly established with favourite stories, songs and even performances by staff, which the children request and look forward to. Children take comfort in writing and receiving notes to and from staff daily. These notes support the developing bonds between staff and children, with staff providing reflections on the child's daily achievements.

Children's care plans are individualised and reflect their preferences, personalities and emotional needs. However, one-to-one discussions with children are not targeted to address important matters or encourage children to reflect on their feelings and understand their circumstances. Follow-up work with children after incidents is not yet embedded into care practice, and there have been missed opportunities for learning and development following significant events in children's lives.

Children are making good progress in education, and staff work closely with relevant external professionals to ensure that children receive the tailored support they need. Staff attend children's school events and parents' evenings and demonstrate pride in the children's achievements. Staff respond promptly to emerging health issues and receive relevant training to support children's individual health needs.

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

The children's safe care plans are specific to each child and clearly document strategies known to de-escalate when children's behaviour poses a risk to themselves or others. However, such strategies are not routinely used, and staff responses to children have been reactive and sometimes punitive. The use of consequences has not been relevant or restorative and has sometimes resulted in an escalation of behaviour during incidents. The new manager has very recently reviewed the use of consequences and has communicated with the team that a restorative and relational approach will be used going forward. However, this is not yet embedded in practice.

Staff's approach to children's care is not always consistent and does not consider children's experiences of trauma, particularly when responding to children in crisis. Staff have used blaming language. At times, staff have challenged behaviour rather than demonstrating curiosity and providing containment to help children feel safe and understood.

Staff lack professional curiosity when responding to behaviours or comments. One child spoke to staff on 3 separate occasions, each time disclosing more information about the same event. This led to a 4-week delay between the first disclosure and managers taking appropriate action in relation to the member of staff. Had further questions been asked, this might have been avoided. When children make allegations, feedback and follow-up work with them are not routinely provided, which could result in children feeling anxious about the impact and outcome of them sharing information.

Safeguarding concerns are appropriately reported to relevant professional agencies. However, staff have not always used the appropriate reporting channels, which has resulted in delays. These shortfalls have been identified by managers through their review of logbooks and have subsequently been reported. Action plans have been implemented to support staff's understanding of the reporting procedures.

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

Changes in management have had a destabilising impact on staff. One staff member reported a 'constant strain of learning new methods of recording and new procedures'. Another said that they are struggling with changing approaches. This is affecting staff morale and confidence in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Staff lack confidence in making decisions without management direction. This affects children's day-to-day experiences, particularly during evenings and weekends when managers are not at the home. Staff are not working in unison, and children are experiencing inconsistent boundaries as a result.

Team meetings and development workshops are held twice a month. They are well planned. They are designed to cover important and relevant topics, including reporting and recording incidents, team communication, trauma-informed responses and restorative practice. Key speakers are invited to deliver some of these workshops,

offering expert insight and reflective discussion. Unfortunately, team meeting minutes are not well recorded, listing the topics discussed rather than the content and team reflections. This limits the opportunity for managers to appraise staff engagement and identify further learning arising from discussions.

Staff receive regular professional supervision. However, the sessions lack structure and reflective discussion. Records include what was said by the supervisee but not how the supervisor responded. They also lack discussion about children's progress and the impact of staff practice. In some instances, records are poorly written and incoherent.

Managerial oversight is not consistently effective, with some key documents lacking evaluative review. However, clear audit trails are in place, and the recently appointed manager has identified areas for development. They are committed and driven to enhancing the overall quality of care provided to 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
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;	13 August 2026

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff: exercise professional curiosity to gain a deeper understanding when exploring children's behaviours or comments; have meaningful discussions with children, in response to significant events or emerging concerns, and when children have made allegations; proactively respond to children's behaviour and make sure that consequences, if used, are relevant and restorative in nature.	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;	13 August 2026

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.
(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c))

This specifically relates to ensuring that children receive consistent care in line with their relevant plans and that communication between staff and children is sensitive to the children's past experiences. Furthermore, ensure that staff cohesion is improved so that children receive consistent care, and day-to-day decision-making is not affected.

Recommendations

- The registered person should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. Management oversight should be consistent throughout and provide evaluation of incidents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, allowing them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. ('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: 2508344

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Derbyshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Offices, Matlock DE4 3AG

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jenna Allen, Social Care Inspector

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