

# 2576423

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the Social Care Common Inspection Framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and provides care for up to five children with social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. At the time of the inspection, four children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2025.

### Inspection dates: 16 and 17 September 2025

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| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b> | <b>good</b> |
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|                                                             |      |
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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 | good |
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 14 May 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 14/05/2024      | Full            | Good                 |
| 14/11/2023      | Full            | Good                 |
| 06/06/2022      | Full            | Good                 |
| 15/11/2021      | Full            | Good                 |

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children have made positive progress since moving to the home and benefit from a positive and nurturing environment that helps them to recover from adverse childhood experiences. The staff demonstrate a strong understanding of the progress that children make over time, and with management support, they carefully think about what each child needs to thrive and achieve mutually agreed goals.

Staff ensure that children's emerging needs are regularly monitored and reviewed. Detailed care plans and risk assessments mean that staff respond proactively to children's changing needs. Children are supported to engage as much as possible in decisions about their lives, and they know that staff will listen to them and take on board their wishes and feelings.

Staff support children's educational attainment. Despite this, the strategies used in school to support one child's educational engagement undermine the support that this child receives from care staff and do not encourage the development of positive social communication for this child. There are indicators that this child may require further specialist assessment regarding their education, and this has not been proactively followed up. This child will also be moving on from the home in the near future, and this could cause further delays regarding any specialist educational assessment.

Another child who has lived in the home for over three months and has an education and health care plan has not benefited from any external educational support. Although staff are providing some learning opportunities for this child, these will not support the child to meet their educational potential. Leaders and managers recognise that stronger educational advocacy may be required to support both children.

Staff are motivated to provide stability and strong foundations for children. Two children have lived in the home for several years, and staff speak with pride about the roles they have in helping these children to grow and develop. One of these children is due to move on from the home in a planned way, and this demonstrates child-centred practice, with decision-making taking into consideration the child's wishes and feelings.

Staff work well with children's birth families and preferred adults, recognising the importance of children maintaining these important connections in their lives. Children's family-time arrangements reflect their individual care plans, and staff provide support to facilitate these.

Children benefit from a range of positive experiences, and this includes community activities and holidays. More recently, staff have started to create individualised memory books for children, which will help to sustain important memories about their time living in the home.

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

Children are supported to develop positive strategies to help manage their mental and emotional well-being. Staff use their understanding of therapeutic approaches and child development to carefully think about how they can help children and enable them to develop the skills they need to be able to manage their feelings and emotions.

Children can identify preferred staff when they need help or support, and positive communication across the staff team promotes a good safeguarding culture. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of assessing and managing known risks, and when safeguarding concerns arise, they take the necessary actions to keep children safe.

Staff respond proactively when children go missing from home, and meticulous records provide detailed accounts of the actions staff take to look for children. Staff routinely spend substantial periods of time searching for children and adopt a highly proactive approach, using instinctive practice and making themselves accountable for establishing children's whereabouts. This enhances the understanding of staff regarding their safeguarding responsibilities and empathy towards children. This practice is worthy of wider dissemination across the social care system.

Despite otherwise good practice, the safeguarding response has been undermined by a lack of return home interviews when children have returned to the home. For example, one child only received two return home interviews, despite 11 separate episodes. Although leaders and managers challenged the placing authority regarding their completion of return home interviews, there was no improvement, and further challenges were not escalated to management in the placing authority.

Children are supported to take risks in accordance with their age. Staff encourage children to make use of time in the local community, supporting children to enhance their peer relationships. Staff carefully balance the management of risks with the ability of children to develop their independence and self-reliance.

Staff undertake a wide range of direct work with children following difficult incidents or following reflections or debrief discussions with children. This further reflects a proactive culture apparent across the home. Staff use their training and knowledge, along with readily available external safeguarding resources, to increase children's understanding and management of current risks. Children's online activity is carefully monitored, and children benefit from targeted work to increase their online safety as appropriate.

Staff who join the home are appropriately recruited, and comprehensive recruitment checks ensure that all staff are subject to robust vetting. All staff benefit from a detailed induction and ongoing training programme.

Staff provide appropriate boundaries for children to ensure that they are safe within the home. All children have door alarms, and well-informed risk assessments demonstrate

proportionality about the ongoing use of these. One child has requested that their alarm continues to be used, following a recent peer conflict, despite this not being required.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The management team leads by example and is valued by the wider staff team. This is underpinned by a positive working culture in which staff benefit from a shared sense of togetherness and unity in their respective roles. One staff member said, 'We have a really strong workforce and very caring and understanding management, who are always striving to build our skills bigger and better for the benefit of the children.'

Managers demonstrate a good understanding about children's progress, and when barriers to this emerge, they carefully think about care-planning decisions, considering their aspirations and limitations in supporting children and valuing children's own feedback about their future plans. Managers instinctively understand what is needed for children and young people to make progress and to achieve their preferred goals.

The management team tries to normalise the experience of living in care as much as possible and help children to create strong foundations for the pathways for their future progress. This means that children experience a homely and child-friendly environment. In addition, children are fortunate to benefit from substantial outside space, which the staff team uses well to engage in social activities with children.

Staff praise the support they receive from the manager. One member of staff said, 'Since joining at the beginning of the year, the manager has transformed the home in an extremely positive way. She is very child focused and ensures the children are given opportunities to grow and develop as they get older.'

Staff receive regular supervision and speak positively about how valuable they find this. Team meetings and managers' meetings are used effectively to think about the care and support of children and to ensure that staff are undertaking all their responsibilities and duties.

Regulatory safeguarding notifications have not always provided the necessary information to support important regulatory oversight, and there are several examples of this. In addition, one serious incident was not notified, despite other safeguarding agencies being involved, resulting in a formal internal investigation.

## 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        |
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| <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(vi)(vii)(viii))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should engage proactively with children's placing authorities to ensure that interim educational support is provided to all children when they are not accessing formal education. The registered person should also ensure that any considerations for further assessment of a child's educational needs, such as for an education and health</p> | 31 October 2025 |

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| care plan, fully consider all the factors that may impact on children's ability to engage positively with their education.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child —</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.<br/>(Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p> | 31 October 2025 |

## Recommendation

- The registered person should escalate accordingly if concerns arise regarding the responsible local authority not completing return home interviews in a timely manner or making suitable alternative arrangements. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the Quality Standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

## 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:** 2576423

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Platform Childcare Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Suite 2 Millennium Court, First Avenue, Burton-on-Trent  
DE14 2WH

**Responsible individual:** Zamir Lal

**Registered manager:** Stacey Jayes

## Inspector

Ashley Edwards, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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