

# 2627967

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care for up to two children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home and spoke with the inspector.

There is no registered manager for the home. The interim manager has not been in the home since May 2025.

### Inspection dates: 5 and 6 August 2025

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

|                                                             |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|

|                                           |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|

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

**Date of last inspection:** 11 December 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 11/12/2024      | Full            | Good                            |
| 02/08/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 28/09/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 01/03/2022      | Full            | Good                            |

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, the same two children have remained living in the home. The children are well supported by consistent staff who understand their needs and know how to respond and communicate with them effectively. Staff have developed strong relationships with the children, who can identify staff they can talk to.

Staff are enthusiastic about children's education. They have advocated for one child to start at a school and challenged professionals to progress reintegration. When children are not attending an education provision, staff support their learning at home. One child has been able to continue to progress academically, despite not being in school for some time.

Children are encouraged to participate in activities that reflect their hobbies and interests. Staff provide lots of support, including accompanying children to football clubs and matches, remaining with them throughout, and celebrating their achievements. Children play a key role in planning a variety of outings, such as visits to theme parks, seaside trips and hiking adventures.

Staff work well with external professionals, ensuring that they are consistently informed about the children's progress and needs. Staff actively participate in all relevant meetings and maintain an open, welcoming environment for visiting professionals. Staff are confident in challenging outdated assessments that no longer reflect the children's current circumstances or risks, helping to prevent inappropriate labelling or stigma.

Staff encourage children to be involved in decisions about the home's decor and to personalise their bedrooms. One child asked for a desk for their gaming console which was purchased. However, some areas of the home are not well maintained, and there are marks on the walls and chipped paintwork. This does not create a homely environment for children.

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

Staff educate children about the risks that they may face and support them to take age-appropriate risks. Children enjoy going out independently with their friends. Staff contact children when they are in the community to ensure that they remain safe.

Since the last inspection, there have been two incidents of children going missing from home. Missing-from-home plans are clear and include the actions that staff should take when children go missing. Staff are proactive at following plans and trying to locate children to bring them home safely. However, return home interviews are not provided to enable professionals to explore the reasons why children go missing.

Risk assessments are clear, detailed and regularly updated. Staff have a clear understanding of risks for children and how to identify them. They use research to further develop their understanding and tools to help children understand risk. Although risks have reduced for children, leaders and managers are reluctant to reduce staffing ratios. This is restrictive for children who have made progress.

Staff use appropriate and proportionate consequences to help children develop safe and appropriate behaviours. Staff talk to children and carefully explain the reasons that a consequence is being imposed. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of significant incidents.

Leaders follow safeguarding procedures when they are concerned about staff practice. They make referrals to the relevant agencies and take appropriate action to ensure that children's safety is prioritised. Investigations into allegations are well managed, and children are kept informed. Children are cared for by adults who are safe.

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

The home has no registered manager, and the interim manager has not been working in the home since May 2025. Senior managers are taking steps to secure a permanent manager.

Staff enjoy learning and development opportunities. This supports them to develop their skills and knowledge. The provider has recently appointed an in-house psychologist, who is providing therapeutic training to staff to improve their skills.

Children are cared for by a stable staff team who have worked together for several years. Staff express a strong commitment to caring for the children and said that they receive support from the deputy and senior managers. However, they highlighted the need for a consistent manager to take overall responsibility for the leadership and direction of the home.

Team meetings and staff supervision take place regularly. These are relevant and child focused and consider the home's areas for improvement. Staff say they find these useful and can talk through any concerns.

There are monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided. Senior managers have recently completed audits of the home to ensure that children have the support they need to make progress. However, six-monthly reviews of the quality of care have not been completed and sent to the regulator. This was a requirement from the last inspection and is restated.

## 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        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider—</p> <p>is an organisation or a partnership;</p> <p>does not satisfy regulation 28; or</p> <p>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—</p> <p>the name of the person so appointed; and</p> <p>the date on which the appointment takes effect.<br/>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>The provider should ensure that they appoint a manager for the home and that the manager applies to register with Ofsted.</p> | 17 October 2025 |
| <p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality-of-care review") at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities, and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 17 October 2025 |

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| <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality-of-care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality-of-care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality-of-care review ("the quality-of-care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality-of-care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality-of-care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a))</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>                                                                                                                                               |                        |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ix))</p> <p>The specifically relates to using the least restrictive approaches to supervising and supporting children, including levels of staff supervision.</p> | <p>17 October 2025</p> |

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a well-maintained, nurturing environment. Any damage should be repaired in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that return home interviews are requested from the child's local authority. Details of return home interviews should be kept for review when assessing risks for children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes 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:** 2627967

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

**Registered provider:** Exceptional Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Exceptional Care Ltd, Malthouse Business Centre, 48 Southport Road, Ormskirk L39 1QR

**Responsible individual:** Natalie Johnson

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sarah Probert, Social Care Inspector

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