

2644925

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately operated and provides care for up to 4 children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 3 children were living in the home. All the children were spoken with.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 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
20/12/2023	Full	Good
27/09/2023	Full	Inadequate
20/07/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Care practice across the home is strong, with clear evidence that children are supported, safeguarded and given opportunities to thrive. Staff show a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and children benefit from a nurturing environment where their needs are prioritised.

Transitions into and out of the home are thoughtfully planned, ensuring that children feel supported and prepared at every stage. When children move on, staff continue to offer guidance and maintain positive relationships, which provides valuable continuity and reassurance. A child who recently moved out said, 'This home is 100% outstanding. I would move back any day. You don't realise what you have until it's gone.'

Since arriving at the home, children have made progress from their starting points. This includes a reduction in behavioural incidents, better engagement in education and increased participation in activities. Some children have also experienced new opportunities, such as travelling on an aeroplane for the first time. Children spoke warmly about their daily lives and the trusting relationships they have built with some staff. However, children did say that they wished that the same staff worked in the home all the time and there were not as many changes.

Children's health needs are well met. Health plans are regularly updated and clearly outline each child's needs, appointments and outcomes. All children have access to the in-house therapist, which has helped them develop stronger emotional stability and a range of effective coping strategies.

Family time is promoted when safe to do so. Staff understand the importance of maintaining or rebuilding these significant relationships and review arrangements regularly to ensure they are appropriate.

The manager and staff team create an environment where children feel comfortable to express their wishes and feelings. Direct work sessions are completed regularly and recorded to a good standard. Children say these sessions help them understand risks and think about their future goals. When children struggle with their emotions, staff use creative, child-friendly approaches to help them learn and practise coping strategies.

Children's ethnicity, heritage and cultural backgrounds are valued and respected. Staff show a genuine interest in understanding children's identities and ensure that foods, celebrations and day-to-day experiences reflect and honour each child's cultural needs.

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

Safeguarding incidents are generally managed well, and allegations are followed up promptly with all relevant professionals informed. Children's complaints are fully investigated, and staff ensure that children are kept updated throughout the process. Children understand the actions taken, and staff explain outcomes in a child-friendly way, promoting transparency and trust.

Missing-from-care incidents are managed effectively. Staff understand the actions they need to take to keep children safe. Each child has a detailed missing-from-care plan outlining risks, triggers and strategies. These plans are reviewed regularly and staff follow them consistently.

Physical interventions are used only when necessary. However, records do not always demonstrate that an independent person has spoken with the child or staff following an intervention, and on one occasion, a single record was completed for 2 separate children. Despite this, the overall approach to behaviour management remains safe.

Consequences are usually used to help children think about their actions and learn from them, and most are applied appropriately. However, some consequences did not have managerial oversight to show they were proportionate. There were also occasions when incidents that happened in school led to consequences being given at home. At times, takeaway food was removed as a consequence, which did not consider a child's lived experience, previous trauma or the impact this may have and did not align with the therapeutic model. There were also instances where different children received different consequences for the same issue, which did not demonstrate a consistent approach.

Recruitment in the home is not robust and does not demonstrate that only suitably vetted staff are working in the home to support children. References have been obtained after staff have started working in the home, and gaps in employment have not been consistently explored.

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

The home has benefited from a strong manager who was clearly child-centred in their approach and advocated effectively for children. However, this manager has recently left the organisation. The deputy manager has continued to work in the home and has high aspirations for children, but they have also been given an additional responsibility for another home within the organisation. Senior leaders have not recognised the impact this will have on the deputy managers capacity to maintain daily oversight.

Staff have a good understanding of each child's needs and what is required to help them develop. However, staff did talk about improvements that are needed in the home. This included, 'clear management structures', 'better communication systems',

'consistent staff' and 'clear boundaries for staff to follow to consistently support children.'

Instability within the wider senior leadership team has had a noticeable impact on the organisation. Changes in the leadership and management of the service have affected consistency, direction and confidence in the organisation's long-term stability. Further disruption is anticipated as the chief executive officer, operational manager and responsible individual are due to leave the organisation imminently. This level of organisational change has created uncertainty and has limited the effectiveness of strategic oversight. There are also concerns about the financial stability of the organisation.

Team meetings take place regularly. Meetings provide an opportunity for staff to discuss children's needs and progress. However, it is not always clear that actions identified in these meetings are followed through or evaluated to ensure that agreed actions are progressed. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate all actions taken.

Supervision sessions are centred around children's progress, but they are not taking place regularly for all staff. Despite being agreed as part of development or outcomes of investigations, single-subject supervisions have not consistently been actioned to ensure that issues around team cohesion and staff practice are addressed.

Although staff have access to training and development opportunities, records are not consistently maintained to show when refresher training is required. As a result, some training is not up to date. In addition, not all staff are qualified within the required timescales.

Staff rotas are not consistently updated to reflect who is working in the home, and they do not always include the manager's hours. This reduces clarity about staffing arrangements and oversight of who is caring for the children at any given time.

Not all records are maintained to an acceptable standard. The admission and discharge book, which was reported to have been water-damaged, was destroyed and therefore not retained for the required 75 years.

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 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(g)(ii))	31 March 2026
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—	31 March 2026

has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. A notification made under this regulation— must include details of— the matter; the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; must be made or confirmed in writing. (Regulation 40 (4)(c) (5)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	31 March 2026
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;	31 March 2026

the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. 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. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b))	
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; ensure that the records are kept up to date; and retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))	31 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: 2644925

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: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

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

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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