

2662751

Registered provider: Holywell Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider and offers care for one child with social and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

One child was living at the home at the start of this inspection. They moved out while the home was being inspected.

This home was registered with Ofsted on 31 January 2022. The registered manager post has been vacant since 15 March 2024.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 January 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 23 September 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

Following the last inspection, Ofsted issued 2 compliance notices under Regulation 12, 'The protection of children standard', and Regulation 13, 'The leadership and management standard'. A monitoring visit was undertaken on 4 November 2025, when the compliance notices were deemed to not have been met. Following this monitoring

visit further compliance notices were issued under Regulation 8, 'The education standard', Regulation 12, 'The protection of children standard' and Regulation 13, 'The leadership and management standard.'

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2025	Full	Inadequate
26/02/2025	Full	Good
13/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall experiences and progress of children are impacted by the shortfalls in safeguarding and the leadership and management of the home. One child was living in the home but moved out during the inspection. The manager served notice because staff were unable to keep the child safe.

The manager and some staff built positive relationships with the child; however, these relationships were ineffective in reducing risk or improving outcomes for the child.

No children have moved into the home since the previous monitoring visit. The provider has created a new policy for considering children's needs and staff skills and planning moves into the home. The policy is comprehensive and promotes well-informed, child-focused transitions. However, this has yet to be used by the manager, therefore the requirement relating to this has been restated.

Staff promoted the child's health. Staff encouraged the child to eat healthily and engage in physical activity. Staff ensured the child was aware of their own health needs and the importance of these and were able to support the child to have their overdue immunisations.

The child gained a suitable school place. While the child waited for their start date, staff implemented a timetable encouraging their home learning and educational activity. Staff were proactive and persistent in supporting the child to engage with the timetable and attempted to get them ready for school.

The home environment has improved since the last inspection. Communal areas are comfortable and well furnished. There are homely touches, such as cushions and ornaments. The child's bedroom was clean and tidy, and personalised in line with their interests and tastes. The child's bedroom smelt of cannabis during the inspection and staff identified this and responded promptly.

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

Risks for the child increased in this setting and could not be safely managed by staff. Episodes of going missing increased in frequency and duration, which meant that staff were unable to supervise and enforce the deprivation of liberty order in place.

Staff followed the child's missing plan when they were missing. They contacted the child and their known associates and undertook broad searches to locate the child. However, the decisions made by staff led to circumstances where the child was more likely to go missing. Furthermore, the child was not always reported missing promptly, which left the child at risk of harm and their welfare not being safeguarded.

The child made an allegation about a member of staff following an incident. The manager considered the immediate safety needs of the child and informed relevant professionals promptly. However, there was a delay in the member of staff being spoken to about this allegation. The child was informed of the actions taken because of their concerns and the manager ensured that relationships were repaired.

Room searches are undertaken when there is a clear safeguarding reason to do so. When possible, staff informed the child prior to the room search and they were present while it was carried out. Staff conduct searches sensitively to ensure the child's dignity is promoted.

Staff held the child when necessary and this was proportionate to the presenting risk. Holds involved using the least amount of force, for the least amount of time. The manager spoke to the child after the event to gain their views. However, staff involved in the restraint were not consistently spoken to ensure their wellbeing and reflect on their practice.

Staff rarely use formal consequences. However, the manager does not review them to assess their effectiveness and any outcomes arising from their use, and staff and the child are not spoken to about them.

A fire safety risk assessment was undertaken by a competent professional in September 2025 which identified substantial fire risk in the home. The manager has ensured that all actions have been completed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has been no registered manager for this home since March 2024. The senior leader who supervises the manager is leaving the service soon. A replacement has yet to be appointed.

The home is sufficiently staffed. There are no vacancies and no agency staff are used in the home. A group of bank staff from another home in the provider network has joined the home during the inspection period. Bank staff are working similar hours to core staff.

The manager regularly supervises core staff. However, bank staff continued to be supervised by another manager within the organisation when they joined the home. These staff did not know the child well, nor were they used to managing the risks to the child. Their supervision sessions were of poor quality and did not consider their practice with the child. The manager has since begun to supervise the bank staff, they have had regular, good-quality supervision.

The manager has some oversight of incidents and safeguarding concerns. However, the manager does not always identify shortfalls in staff practice, and when they do, they do not always address them with staff. Therefore, management oversight is not consistently effective in improving the service.

The provider has employed a new independent person to gain fresh scrutiny of the home and practice within it on a monthly basis. The visitor has been to the home; however, their initial report is delayed and has not been sent to the provider. Therefore, it is unclear whether the independent person is thorough and robust in fulfilling their role, and whether the manager can respond promptly to their recommendations.

A review of the quality of care has not been undertaken in the inspection period by the manager. Therefore, the requirement has been restated.

Most staff have the appropriate qualification. However, there is one staff member who is significantly over the required timescale to complete this. The manager is aware of this issue and is tracking this within supervision. The manager liaises with the staff member's tutor on their behalf. However, there is no evidence of support to the member of staff to ensure they complete their qualification in a timely way.

The manager has positive relationships with the child's professional network. The manager communicates effectively with other agencies. This promotes joined-up care.

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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iii)(v)(vi)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that staff are vigilant to the signs that children are likely to go missing and make decisions that prevent this. The timescales within which children should be reported missing should correlate with the risks they are subject to, and staff should ensure that this is done promptly.	11 March 2026
*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—	11 March 2026

understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must use their oversight to recognise practice shortfalls and address these in order to improve the service and outcomes for children.	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider— is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii) (2)(a)(b))	11 March 2026
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	9 April 2026

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) The registered person must ensure that they undertake a full assessment of children's needs before they move into the home, considering the impact of and on the adjacent sister home.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff receive regular, effective supervision.	9 April 2026
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	9 April 2026

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children and staff are spoken to following an incident requiring a physical intervention, and following consequences, within the required timescales.	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—	9 April 2026

children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that Regulation 44 reports provide a thorough and robust assessment of the home's arrangements for providing care to children.	
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. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. 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"). The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4) (5)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the quality of care review includes sufficient detail about the quality of care provided and the way the home is managed.	9 April 2026

The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children’s home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. 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 (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that all staff complete their qualifications within the required timescale. Where staff are over this timescale, the registered person should ensure that this is monitored, and that staff are supported to complete this promptly.	9 April 2026
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2662751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Holywell Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Dalton House, 9 Dalton Square, Lancaster LA1 1WD

Responsible individual: Sabe Connor

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Sarah Huntbatch, Social Care Inspector

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