

2746315

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to five children who have experienced childhood trauma and display emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since December 2024.

At the time of the inspection, five children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2025

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

Date of last inspection: 10 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/04/2024	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

All five children were present during the inspection, and the inspector saw and spoke with them.

One child talked about their positive relationships with staff and that they feel able to express their views and feelings. Four children moved into the home eight months ago. They were initially withdrawn and reluctant to speak with staff. However, they are now forging good relationships and talking about their lived experiences. This is attributable to staff providing consistent care that is predictable and reliable.

The registered manager and staff prioritise children's health needs and ensure that they access the right support. They consult with the children about medical interventions and help them to make informed decisions about treatment. Staff have supported children to gain weight, access the sexual health clinic, and plan for teeth extractions. Staff have developed an understanding of children's health conditions in order to care for them. They sensitively prompt children to take their medication to avoid hospital admission.

Staff regularly talk to children about the benefits of education and encourage them to attend school. However, children's school attendance is varied. Three children's attendance has improved overall, demonstrating progress from their starting points. Some children have achieved school awards for their efforts in different subjects. Conversely, two children have disengaged from education. Staff continue to work collaboratively with schools and social workers to address ongoing challenges in this respect.

Staff recognise when children are struggling to adapt to new expectations. For example, some children have previously been burdened with the responsibility of caring for their younger siblings. Staff support them to step away from this role and discover their own identity. Staff have an empathetic approach, recognising that this adjustment is hard and confusing for children.

Staff are adept at creating opportunities for children to explore new activities and hobbies, broadening their experiences. One child spoke fondly about walking through a river bare foot with his brothers, sisters and staff. This was a novel experience for him. Other children have developed a love for rugby, ice skating and golf. They have won awards and participated in tournaments, which has boosted their confidence and social skills.

Children are supported to maintain relationships with people who are important to them. Staff arrange for children to spend time with their sisters, brothers and friends. They invite grandparents to events so that they can champion the children, for example rugby tournaments. When necessary, staff supervise family time to ensure children's safety and well-being.

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

Managers and staff have an in-depth understanding of children's lived experiences, needs and vulnerabilities. They are curious about how this impacts children's behaviours, and they are mindful of their susceptibility to particular risks, for example coercive and controlling relationships. Staff skilfully educate children through conversations, helping them to identify harmful behaviours and name them.

Staff respond appropriately when children demonstrate that they are distressed. They use de-escalation strategies that encourage children to talk about their feelings and to reflect on their behaviours. Staff talk to children about their expectations, and, consequently, they generally respond well to boundaries. There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection.

Staff make good efforts to locate children who go missing from home. They try to establish contact with the children via phone and search for them at locations and addresses they are known to frequent. One child's missing-from-home episodes have increased, and staff are working collaboratively with the social worker to explore whether the child can have sleepovers at his friend's houses to lessen the risk. Staff respond quickly when the child contacts them and asks to be collected.

Managers and staff are mindful of children's family dynamics and how this influences their emotional health and well-being. While staff support children to see their parents in accordance with their care plans, they promptly share any concerns or worrying observations with the children's social workers. One social worker highlighted that she valued staff's insight because they know the children well and can therefore spot changes in their behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Managers are becoming skilled at working with children who have experienced chronic neglect and chaotic parenting. They recognise that children need opportunities to develop bonds with staff before they can start working towards targets and making sustained progress. They stick with children through periods of regression, accepting that they can become emotionally unsettled when they start to process their lived experiences.

Managers have demonstrated strong collaborative working with external professionals with the aim of helping children to make progress. For one child, they are working closely with the school in the hope of avoiding permanent exclusion. They also work closely with health professionals to ensure that children's needs are understood and prioritised.

Staff enjoy working in the home. They speak positively about the culture, and the support that they receive through timely supervisions and training. Managers expect staff to work to a high standard, and, when necessary, they extend staff's probations to

ensure they have the sufficient skill and confidence to carry out their roles. Managers take appropriate action in response to concerns raised about staff, prioritising the children's safety and well-being.

The registered manager generally has good oversight of the home. However, there are some areas for development, for example drawing out learning after incidents and exploring this with staff to aid their development and future practice. Additionally, ensuring that all children have healthy routines and structured home education plans in accordance with the statement of purpose.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered manager should ensure that when children are not in full-time education, they are supported to regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- The registered manager should ensure that they maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulation, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: 2746315

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Platform Childcare Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Zamir Lal

Registered manager: Amy Dourneen

Inspector:

Tara Webb, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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