

2788637

Registered provider: Cheshire East Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home was registered with Ofsted in April 2024 and provides care for up to 3 children who experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living in the home. The inspectors spoke with all the children about their experiences of living in the home.

There is a registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 3 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/06/2025	Full	Good
19/11/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Summary of findings

Staff provide a caring environment for the children. However, there are inconsistencies in staff practice that affect the provision of consistent routines and boundaries for children.

Children's plans are child centred, and staff support family time appropriately. However, staff do not consistently meet all children's health and educational needs. There are also weaknesses in safeguarding practice.

The registered manager has identified areas for improvement to enhance the care provided. However, these improvements are not yet embedded in staff practice, particularly in relation to care and safeguarding.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children make variable progress while living in this home. One child is making good progress across all areas of their life. However, other children are not making sufficient progress from their starting points.

The home environment is warm and welcoming. Some areas are personalised, including photos of children displayed in the lounge. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, which helps them feel settled in the home.

Due to previously identified risks for one child, staff store cutlery in a locked cupboard. However, the assessment of this measure is not sufficiently robust and detracts from the homely environment.

Staff do not always help children develop the skills and strategies needed to manage their emotions effectively.

Children are healthy, and staff encourage them to attend healthcare appointments. However, there has been a significant delay in one child receiving the specialist assessments they require. This has resulted in delays in progressing plans for the child.

The registered manager is taking steps to improve children's experiences by introducing consistent daily routines. However, these are not yet embedded in staff practice.

Children know how to raise complaints. However, when a complaint was made, the complaints process did not support the registered manager in responding in a timely manner.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children told inspectors that they feel safe living in the home.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual risks and vulnerabilities. Children's plans are clear, and staff regularly update them with relevant information.

Staff speak with children about issues in line with their individual needs. These discussions help children to understand risks and how to keep themselves safe. While some discussions are planned, many take place in response to significant events.

Since the last inspection, a child made an allegation against a member of staff. The registered manager did not manage this effectively. The child described this as having a negative effect on their relationship with this member of staff.

Children rarely go missing from home. However, when they do, staff follow clear procedures and work effectively with relevant safeguarding professionals to ensure that children return home as quickly and safely as possible.

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

The home is led and managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager, who is supported by equally experienced and qualified senior staff. The staff were positive about the support they receive from the registered manager.

However, there are shortfalls in the registered manager's oversight of the home. This does not always support staff to make continuous improvements to the care they provide for children.

Management oversight of the home is not robust. There are gaps in the manager's monitoring and review systems. These represent missed opportunities to drive ongoing improvements in the quality of care provided.

There was a delay in the registered manager submitting a notification to Ofsted in line with regulatory requirements. This limits the regulator's ability to monitor the care provided for children.

Staff receive support through supervision and regular team meetings, led by the registered manager or other senior leaders. Supervision records demonstrate that staff practice is reviewed and actions are agreed, which supports some staff members to develop in their roles.

However, one staff member who is new to the home did not receive supervision in line with the supervision policy, which may hinder their development in their role.

External monitoring visits are carried out; however, these would improve if the independent visitor spent time talking with staff and children to support the registered manager in making improvements to the operation of the home. The registered manager agreed that this would improve practice in this area.

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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vi)(vii)) Specifically, the registered person and staff must understand when and how to escalate concerns using the home's child protection procedures to ensure that they are investigated and managed without delay.	1 September 2026
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. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that Ofsted is notified without delay of any allegations against staff or of any other incidents that they consider to be serious.	1 September 2026
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—	1 September 2026

that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; 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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(v)(viii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there are routines, support and educational provision in place to give all the children in the home the opportunity to progress in education and achieve their potential.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— strive to gain each child’s respect and trust; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;	1 September 2026

that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(viii)(ix)(b)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that, following incidents of concern, appropriate mediation between staff and children is undertaken, with timely advice and effective guidance provided.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that any restrictive measures affecting all children, such as locking away cutlery, are supported by a clear rationale and based on a current, identified risk.	1 September 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. This should enable staff to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children in their care. In particular, the registered person should ensure that the frequency of supervision for new staff aligns with the workforce development plan, which requires supervision to take place every 2 weeks for new starters. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2788637

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cheshire East Council

Registered provider address: Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

Responsible individual: Samantha Walker

Registered manager: Sherbanu Spencer

Inspectors

Shane North, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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