

2801032

Registered provider: Polar Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to 3 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in August 2024. The manager registered with Ofsted in April 2026.

There was one child living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke to them about their experience of living here.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 May 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 28 October 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

In October 2025, the home was judged 'inadequate' due to the serious and widespread safeguarding failures and poor leadership and management of the home. Ofsted issued a notice to suspend the registration of the home. Two monitoring visits were carried out in January and March 2026, and the suspension was lifted on 14 April 2026.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/10/2025	Full	Inadequate
25/02/2025	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Staff have built positive relationships with the child and respond to their needs with care and consistency. However, weaknesses in education planning, staffing stability and management oversight mean the child does not experience consistently good care.

Leaders demonstrate reflective practice and are beginning to make improvements, but these have not resulted in the stability and structure the child needs to be safe and make sustained progress.

Inspection judgements

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

The child has settled into the home and describes it as the 'best place they have lived'. Staff have been able to build positive relationships with the child and respond calmly when they are unsettled. The child recognises the difference between this placement and previous ones, and this growing trust in staff is reflected in their willingness to accept support.

The child does not have an education placement and has not had one since before moving into the home. A tutor has been identified and a plan is being developed, but this has not been put in place. Some delays sit outside the control of the provider, but the child's routine currently lacks structure. The child's health and wellbeing are promoted well, and the child has engaged with community health services to attend a stop-smoking clinic, which has enabled them to have a plan to reduce smoking.

The child has access to a clinical team that also works closely with staff. It is too early to measure the impact of this work given the short time the child has been living in the home. However, staff have supported the child with sleep routines through gradual strategies tailored to their needs.

The child takes part in activities such as pool, BMX riding and seaside trips. The placing authority social worker says that there are strong relationships with staff, and early boundary testing is emerging as the child becomes more settled into the home's routines. These are positive signs.

The home is warm and cosy, with the child's artwork displayed throughout, which shows their creativity and the value staff place on their achievements. Staff encourage them to try new things, and this is beginning to increase engagement.

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

The child requires close supervision by staff, as they are subject to a deprivation of liberty order. A breach of the supervision requirement emerged when a waking-night staff member fell asleep on shift. The manager acted swiftly in response to this incident.

The behaviour management approach is consistent and based on embedded principles as outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Staff follow the behaviour support plan well, and the child recognises the difference between this placement and previous ones. This emerging trust shows the approach is beginning to have an impact. Safeguarding arrangements, including room searches and notifications, are generally in place and linked to presenting risks.

Staff understand the child's risks well, and this helps them respond calmly and proportionately to their needs. The risk assessment is updated regularly, and this preparation supports safer practice across the team. However, inconsistency in staffing impacts on the child receiving consistent care.

Physical interventions have been frequent in the early weeks of the placement, and this reflects the instability of this period. Each intervention has been proportionate, with detailed records and prompt debriefs for the child and staff. The child has been able to repair relationships quickly after incidents, and managers complete learning exercises that demonstrate reflection and oversight. The pattern of interventions suggests risk is beginning to reduce.

Staffing has been unstable since the placement began. The child does not consistently receive care from familiar adults, which increases the likelihood of inconsistent responses to risk.

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

The registered manager has a detailed understanding of the child's needs and history. Staff describe feeling supported, and the manager leads by example, including covering shifts during periods of staffing instability. This provides continuity for the child, but it also reflects the pressure the team is under and the need for more stable staffing arrangements.

Training records show that staff are up to date and research-informed practice is beginning to feature in team meetings. The commissioned clinical service is well coordinated, with clinicians coming to the home regularly to support both staff and the child. These strengths show developing leadership, but they are not matched by consistent operational practice.

Care planning records are not sufficiently organised because as the manager is operating a dual recording system, which increases the risk of staff working from incomplete or inaccurate information.

Supervision takes place and staff value it, but there are gaps in frequency. The manager has not consistently met the expectations for staff during their probationary period. This inconsistency limits the manager's ability to ensure staff practice develops.

Some records are not sufficiently complete. Individual support sessions following room searches are not consistently linked to relevant entries, and some could not be located.

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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there are sufficient staff with the right mix of skills and ability to look after children in a safe manner.	23 July 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—	23 July 2026

that staff—

help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;

support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;

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;

maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;

raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;

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;

help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;

help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and

that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.

(Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that when children are out of education, there are sufficient routines that enable a return to education as soon as possible.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b)(c))	23 July 2026
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. Case records must be kept— if the child dies before attaining the age of 18, for 15 years from the date of the child's death; in cases not falling within sub-paragraph (a), for 75 years from the child's date of birth; securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there; and in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's records are organised in a manner that allows for effective oversight of the child's care.	23 July 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: 2801032

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Polar Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Halls House Farm, Chain Lane, Staining, Blackpool FY3 0DP

Responsible individual: Jonathan Broadstock

Registered manager: Aulora Mortimer

Inspector

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

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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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