

2809311

Registered provider: Liverpool City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. The home is registered to provide care for five children with social and emotional difficulties. There were five children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2024.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are five children living in the home. Four children spoke to the inspector. The children are comfortable and relaxed in their home environment.

The children have built positive relationships with the adults who care for them. Children were observed having sensitive conversations with staff, during which, staff were seen to be supportive, patient and nurturing in their approach with children.

Children are making progress. Staff have built effective working relationships with children's placing authorities to ensure that care planning is effective. Generally, children take part in the decisions being made about their lives, and when this is not possible, the manager and staff team represent the child's views and advocate on their behalf. This enables children to feel listened to and encourages trusting relationships between children and members of staff.

Staff promote a structured routine for children. They promote good hygiene and facilitate their medical appointments. When there has been previous delay with medical plans, staff are quick to refer children for specialist services to ensure that they are given the appropriate treatment and support. Staff encourage children to take part in activities outside the home, such as going on days out to the beach, ice skating, bowling, having tea with friends and visiting coffee shops for milkshakes and desserts.

Staff promote and encourage school attendance. When there are barriers to this, staff work alongside the child and their school to implement incentive plans. One child is studying for their exams and has recently obtained a college place. When asked about their revision plans, the child was able to show the inspector their books and equipment and the space in their bedroom that they use to revise, which was organised and well kept.

Children engage in conversations with staff about their feelings, past experiences and what support they may need. When children are engaging in these conversations with staff, staff generally ensure that the conversations are thorough and meaningful. However, the use of professional curiosity would strengthen these conversations and encourage more open dialogue.

Staff have been flexible and supportive in their approach towards family time and supporting children to maintain links with the people who matter most to them. Leaders and managers are proactive at liaising with children's placing authority to ensure that plans around family time are reviewed regularly to ensure that children's safety is prioritised.

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

There is a collaborative approach with partner agencies to reduce risks for children. When children are at risk of harm, staff know how to respond and take the necessary actions. Risk management plans are in place to ensure that staff take a consistent approach in safely caring for children.

Staff know what to do when children go missing from home. Staff take all necessary actions to try and bring children home safely, implementing thorough searches of the local area, liaising with external agencies, friends and family and reporting children as missing in line with protocols. When children return home, staff manage their needs sensitively and with care and support and liaise effectively with missing-from-home coordinators to ensure the child is seen and spoken to by someone independent from the home.

When allegations against staff have occurred, these have been reported to external agencies such as the child's placing authority and the designated officer, and concerns are investigated by the senior management team. However, on two occasions, the manager failed to notify HMCI.

Children are able to identify a trusted person who they can speak to. Children know how to make a complaint. When complaints have been raised, the senior management team reviews these in a timely manner and follows up with the child to resolve their complaints and find appropriate solutions.

When children are upset or frustrated, staff appropriately seek to find the reasons why by speaking to the child, spending time with them, providing clear boundaries and offering appropriate solutions. This helps the child to feel safe and cared for.

The use of physical intervention has been necessary on two occasions. A record of these incidents is clear, and the child was provided with a full debrief with their views contained.

When consequences are implemented, generally, they are appropriate and fair. However, on occasion, consequences have not always been effective and do not help the child learn from their mistakes and prevent the behaviour from being repeated. The manager acknowledged the shortfall on inspection, recognising that there had been inconsistency in relation to this. A requirement has been raised to this effect.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been registered since November 2024. She is suitably experienced and qualified. She works closely with senior leaders and managers and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the home.

The manager ensures the home is maintained to a high standard and meets the needs of the children living in the home. The home has a relaxed atmosphere with

ample space for children to play and relax. The manager is in the process of obtaining garden equipment for the children to use in the summer months.

The manager works proactively with a range of external agencies and professionals. The manager escalates concerns to children's placing authorities to ensure that children are receiving appropriate care planning in line with their presenting needs and to secure positive outcomes for children.

Internal monitoring and review systems are not yet fully embedded and, at times, lack critical oversight and evaluation. When there are incidents, including shortfalls in staff practice, leaders and managers have not always ensured that learning is taken forward to improve children's experiences.

Staff spoken to said they feel supported by management. They receive regular supervision, which provides a good balance of focusing on children's risks and needs and staff well-being. Staff feel confident to report concerns to management, who they state is always available. Staff were aware of the whistle-blowing procedure and feel confident that any concerns raised would be dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.

Team meetings take place; however, the quality of the meeting record varies, and they are not consistently used as forum for staff to debrief collectively. This is a missed opportunity for staff to reflect on serious incidents and consider alternative approaches of caring for children.

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 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 (c))	29 May 2025
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— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v))	29 May 2025

This is specifically in relation to ensuring that consequences for behaviour are reasonable and proportionate, help the child learn from their mistakes and prevent the behaviour from being repeated.	
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— 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)) In particular, the registered person must make sure that they are using their systems of monitoring and review to maintain good oversight of the running of the home. When there are incidents, including shortfalls in staff practice, the registered person must ensure that learning is taken forward to improve children's experiences.	29 May 2025

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. When necessary, they should maintain constructive dialogues with children, including using professional curiosity as a strategy to strengthen conversations, which helps children recognise their feelings, emotions and behaviours. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. This particularly relates to ensuring that team meetings take place regularly and are used as a forum to help staff reflect from serious incidents and have the opportunity to debrief as a staff team

where appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: 2809311

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Liverpool City Council

Registered provider address: Cunard Building, Water Street, Liverpool L3 1AH

Responsible individual: Peter Murphy

Registered manager: Catherine Cavanagh

Inspector

Michelle Greenhalgh, Social Care Inspector

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