

SC035477

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 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: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
23/03/2023	Full	Good
22/03/2022	Full	Good
15/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home. Since the last inspection, four children have moved out of the home and two children have been welcomed into the home, and have settled in well. Children experience well-planned moves into and out of the home. This includes visiting the home and meeting the staff team before they move in.

Children live in harmony with each other and learn how to accept their differences without prejudice. Skilled staff help children to settle into the home. The strong bonds between staff and children are built on trust and respect. As a result, children enjoy stability, which in turn supports their progress.

Children have access to specialist services and support to promote their physical and emotional well-being. They are encouraged and supported to attend routine health appointments. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe administration and management of medicines to promote the safety and well-being of children.

Children engage with support services and understand the risks associated with substance misuse. However, despite ongoing efforts from the staff and a multi-agency approach to reducing risks, one child continues to make choices that can potentially impact on their long-term health.

Children have educational placements available to meet their individual needs. However, despite the staff's best efforts, some children find it very difficult to maintain a positive routine that enables them to engage with their education. This limited attendance means that some children are left without any meaningful activities to do during the day.

Children have good opportunities to develop independence skills, build on their existing abilities and take controlled risks. Children's confidence and resilience are developed through these opportunities.

Staff support children to spend time with their families, and supervise this when necessary. This helps children to sustain relationships with people who are important to them.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the children in their care and their individual vulnerabilities. There is a clear procedure for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns. Staff have a good understanding of this process and of their responsibilities.

Children's risk assessments and vulnerabilities are well known by staff and are detailed in their individual plans and risk assessments. Staff are proactive in identifying risks to children, and review these risks regularly.

Staff use de-escalation techniques and only use physical restraint as a last resort. There is good evaluation of incidents, along with reflective work with children and staff that is overseen by the manager.

Staff follow protocols effectively when children go missing from the home. Managers and staff also respond to any child exploitation risks well. For example, when one child's incidents and vulnerabilities recently increased, they followed the child's protocols, worked well with professionals and took decisive action to keep the child safe. Strategy meetings were held and return home interviews took place. These actions reassure children that staff and managers care about their safety and welfare.

Key-work sessions are individualised to the needs of the children. Topics covered show that areas of risk are discussed. This demonstrates that children are being helped to learn what it means to keep themselves safe.

Children live in a physically safe environment. There are measures in place to ensure that the home is free of hazards. Regular fire drills are carried out to ensure that children know what they need to do in the event of an emergency.

Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These procedures promote the safety of children by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is enthusiastic and committed to the home. He is ambitious for staff, children and the functioning of the home. Staff speak very positively about the manager and say that he is supportive.

The manager knows the strengths and areas for development in the team and addresses shortfalls through supervision sessions and team meetings. He provides staff with regular supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice. Team meetings are well attended, and staff confidently engage in discussions about the service and the children.

All the staff either have a minimum level 3 qualification in residential childcare or are due to complete their course within regulatory timescales.

Training records show that staff access a wide range of training courses, which are centred on children's specific needs and vulnerabilities. However, the same records show that not all staff training is up to date. For example, some staff members'

safeguarding refresher training is out of date. This means that staff are not updating their skills and knowledge.

The staff and manager have established good working relationships with a range of agencies and external professionals who are involved in children's care. Staff work closely with teachers, social workers and parents. This ensures that appropriate support is in place to encourage children's progress and maximise their potential.

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 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— 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; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)) This specifically relates to children in the home being engaged in education, training or employment.	11 April 2025
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 ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	11 April 2025

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))

This specifically relates to ensuring that staff training is kept up to date.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff continually support the child to make healthier choices and reinforce the dangers of substance misuse on the child's health. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards, page 34, paragraph 7.10)

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: SC035477

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: John Simpson

Registered manager: Jonathan Sewell

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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