

SC040982

Registered provider: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home registered with Ofsted in May 2003 and provides short breaks for children with complex needs.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2024.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 December 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: 15 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2024	Full	Good
12/12/2023	Full	Outstanding
01/03/2023	Full	Outstanding
10/11/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The manager and staff support children well and hold them in high regard. Children have positive relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the children's individual needs. This helps staff to meet the children's needs well.

Staff are aware of children's individual communication methods. This empowers children to participate in choosing activities and meals and to express their emotions.

The manager and staff have created a safe environment where children feel heard and can express their wishes and feelings. The home is well presented and includes specialist equipment to meet children's individual needs. The children are involved in choosing the decoration for their bedrooms. There are many photos of the children displayed, giving them a sense of belonging.

Children are introduced to the short-breaks service at a pace that is right for them and their families. Staff spend time getting to know the children when they visit the home. One social worker said:

'The transition plans to support [name of child] were thorough, with teatime visits where staff had listened to likes and dislikes and bought games which they knew they would like. It was clear to see there was a lot of thought that went into this, and this has helped [name of child] from the very beginning to trust the staff.'

Staff maintain good communication with children's families. Children's achievements are celebrated by staff and families. Families are complimentary about the high levels of care their children receive and the support provided to them by staff. One family member said, 'We know [name of child] is happy and safe.'

Children have opportunities to enjoy their individual interests, such as swimming, watching their favourite television programme, going on walks, planting in the garden, playing the musical instruments, having their hair and nails done and doing arts and crafts. One family member said, 'We get lots of photos on the [name of app], which is lovely.'

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

Children who stay at the home have various health needs. These are understood and managed well by the manager and staff. Staff receive specialist training to support the children's complex health needs. Medication is stored securely, and the processes are robust.

Managers and staff consistently review and update the individual risk assessments for each child. Staff understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. There have been no missing-from-home incidents. Staff have a good understanding of the missing-from-home procedures.

There is good multi-agency working. The manager and staff work closely with professionals to ensure that the children receive appropriate support. One social worker said, 'Staff are strong advocates for the children and will challenge things with other professionals appropriately to support the children.'

Positive recognition and praise outweigh negative consequences. The use of natural consequences supports the children to restore and rebuild relationships in the home and have a sense of ownership.

Staff only use physical intervention as a last resort to keep children safe. When this has happened, children and staff have not always had the opportunity to talk about the incidents. This does not ensure that staff and children can reflect on the incident and that the manager can identify any improvements to staff practice or good practice to share with the staff.

Safer recruitment processes are followed, which means that staff are recruited safely. Recruitment checks ensure that only suitable staff are employed to work with children at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a dedicated, caring, and ambitious manager who advocates well for the children. She ensures that she is present in the home and accessible to children and staff. Two dedicated deputy managers work together to support the manager, staff, and children.

Staff receive regular reflective supervision, which gives them the opportunity to reflect on their practice and consider development opportunities. Staff team meetings are effective and held regularly. One staff member said, 'The teamwork is excellent. We all share a common goal to prioritise the children's well-being.'

The manager and staff maintain good levels of communication with other professionals. Professionals speak highly of the manager and staff. One team manager said, 'The communication is far strengthened.'

The managers' internal monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying and responding to the shortfalls in staff practice. For example, managers have failed to take appropriate action following an incident of physical intervention. This affects the oversight and care provided to children.

The manager has assessed the suitability of the home to ensure that children remain in a safe area. However, the review of the premises assessment could be further enhanced by seeking consultation from relevant individuals.

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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) The registered person must ensure that monitoring and review systems are in place that ensure quality of care provided. This specifically relates to management oversight of significant incidents.	16 January 2026
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline, or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time, and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used, or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	16 January 2026

the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv)) The registered person must ensure that reflection is carried out with staff members and children following the use of physical intervention.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2)) The registered person must ensure that all relevant individuals are consulted when considering the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises.	16 January 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: SC040982

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan WN1 1YN

Responsible individual: Steven Swinhoe

Registered manager: Julie Whitehead

Inspectors

Stacey Ilaboya, Social Care Inspector
Karen Andrews, Social Care Inspector

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