

SC359836

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 six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, six children were living at the home. Five children spoke with the inspectors.

The home has not had a registered manager since December 2024.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 February 2026

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	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 18 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2024	Full	Good
19/09/2023	Full	Good
14/09/2022	Full	Good
19/04/2022	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are making positive progress in several areas of their lives. The home provides a warm and nurturing environment. It is clean, comfortable and personalised, with children's rooms reflecting their interests and achievements. Certificates of children's successes are displayed throughout the home and help to create a sense of pride and belonging. This helps them feel valued, and emotionally secure.

Not all children find it easy to engage in education, and attendance is not yet consistent for everyone. Staff are creative in identifying alternative educational activities that help children continue learning. They support children well to attend education and to develop skills that are appropriate for their age and level of understanding.

Children are encouraged to build independence through learning practical skills. Where appropriate they have their own shopping budget and are responsible for making some of their own meals, this helps them prepare for adulthood.

Children's health needs are met effectively. They attend routine and specialist health appointments with staff support. Staff work sensitively with children to help them understand their health needs and maintain healthy lifestyles. This contributes to children's overall physical and emotional well-being.

Staff recognise the importance of family and friendship networks in children's lives. Where in line with children's care plans parents are invited to the home. A parent said, '[Childs name] has been supported by the staff and so have I'. They support children to maintain and build relationships with those who are important to them, helping them sustain connections that enhance their identity and sense of belonging.

Children are supported to express their views and to develop strategies for managing conflict and expressing difficult feelings. Staff provide consistent emotional support and model healthy ways of communicating and resolving issues, promoting resilience and emotional growth.

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

Children benefit from a positive safeguarding culture in the home. There have been no physical interventions for several months, which reflects a thoughtful approach to behaviour support and a staff team skilled at de-escalation.

Risk assessments and individual behaviour support plans are regularly reviewed, clearly written and tailored to each child's needs. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of triggers and calming strategies and work alongside partner agencies to ensure children remain safe.

Online safety is well managed. Staff implement appropriate restrictions, including monitoring apps, controlled wi-fi access and structured routines around device usage. Children have planned conversations with staff to help them understand risks, and staff respond swiftly when concerns arise, including removing devices where necessary. This proactive approach reduces opportunities for harm and supports children's emotional wellbeing.

Children who go missing from the home are highly vulnerable when they are missing. Staff work closely with safeguarding partners and engage in regular strategy meetings; they take proactive actions such as looking for children. These measures have contributed to a reduction in children going missing over time.

Managers acknowledged that they believe a room search took place in response to a report of a child having a weapon but that this was not recorded. The lack of accurate recording reduces managerial oversight and reflects a gap in professional curiosity.

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

Leadership and management within the home have been inconsistent during the inspection period. Instability in the management structure, including prolonged gaps in key leadership posts and the absence of a Registered Manager, has weakened the home's ability to provide strong, reliable oversight. This lack of accountable leadership has contributed to uncertainty within the staff team.

Oversight and quality assurance systems, such as management reflection logs, file audits, are in place but have not always been effective. A notification relating to a fire-setting incident was not submitted, limiting the regulators oversight of significant incidents.

The home has experienced periods of reduced staffing, with shifts running below the intended complement. These pressures have been exacerbated by long term sickness, vacant posts, and reliance on casual or agency workers. Reduced staffing has impacted continuity of care for children and stretched managers' ability to provide support, guidance, and oversight.

Supervision arrangements have not been consistently delivered. There have been notable gaps following the Registered Manager's departure. During these periods, staff lacked opportunities for reflective practice, professional development and timely case discussions. This shortfall is compounded by insufficient support from senior management who have not ensured that staff or the assistant managers receive consistent, practice-related supervision.

Recent supervision files indicate better-quality discussions since new management support was introduced. Team meetings are taking place and include child-focused discussions, safeguarding matters, risk management and learning opportunities.

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, 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— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e)) In particular the registered person must ensure that significant incidents such children setting fires as are notified to Ofsted.	06 March 2026
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff including the assistant managers receive regular supervision.	06 March 2026

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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 1(a)(b) (2)(a)(d)(e)(h)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there are sufficient staffing levels in the home to meet the needs of all children.	06 March 2026
The registered person must ensure that— the effectiveness and any consequences of the use 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)(vi)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	6 March 2026

The registered person must ensure that all behaviour management records, including room searches conducted for safeguarding purposes, are accurately completed and maintained.	
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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: SC359836

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Lancashire County Council, PO Box 78, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: John Simpson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Cathy Wilkins, social care inspector

Debbie Dawson, social care inspector

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